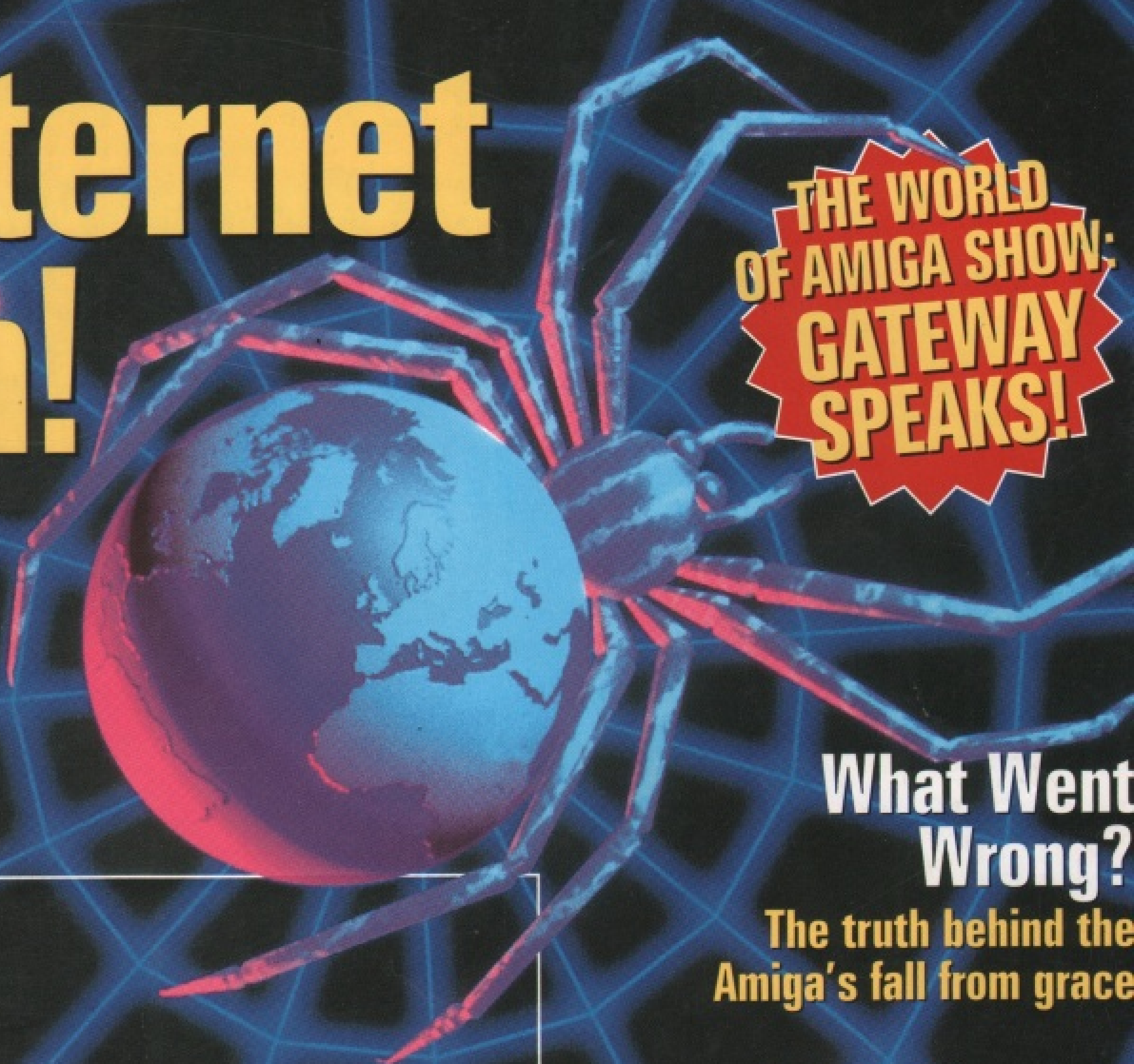
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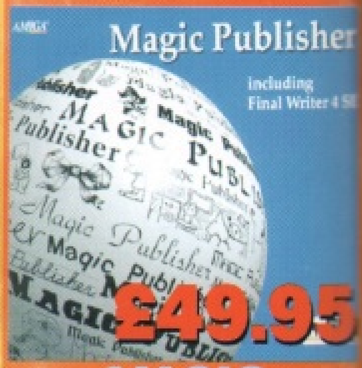
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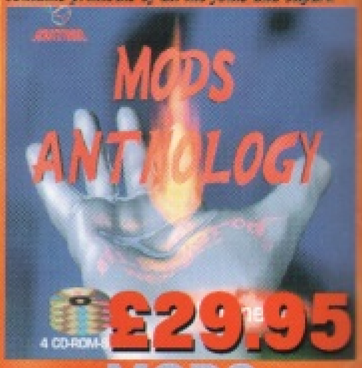
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Editorial



Talk about packed! This issue of CU Amiga is one of the busiest ever. If anyone tells you the Amiga is dead, stuff this in their face and you'll soon shut them up. Read all about the recent World of Amiga show and the Gateway/Amiga press conference, allow us to make you an Internet offer you can't refuse, debate the Amiga's slide down the slippery slope with us, and chat with cartoon maestro Eric Schwartz. Or how about that wodge of reviews opposite? If that's not enough, get your teeth into our extended tutorial section and check out our brilliant Quarterback and Big Red Adventure cover disks and CD. Now I can't say fairer than that!

Tony

Tony Horgan, Editor

Cover Feature



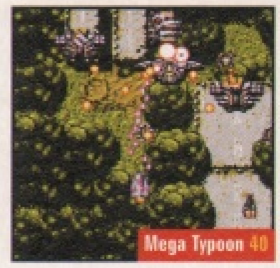


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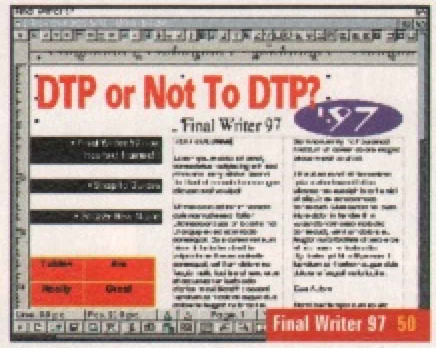


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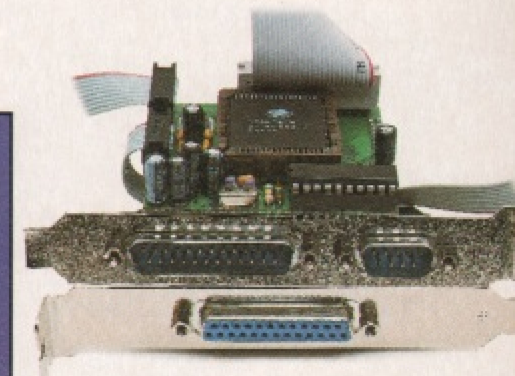

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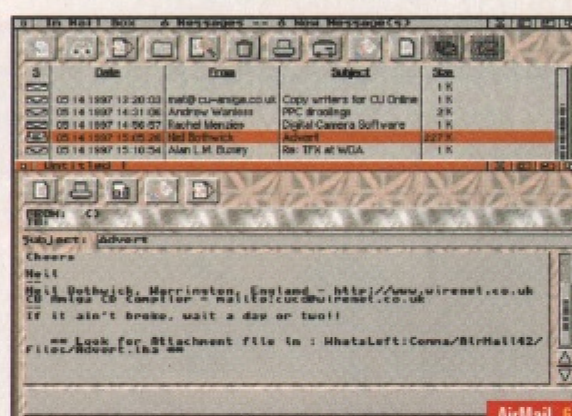
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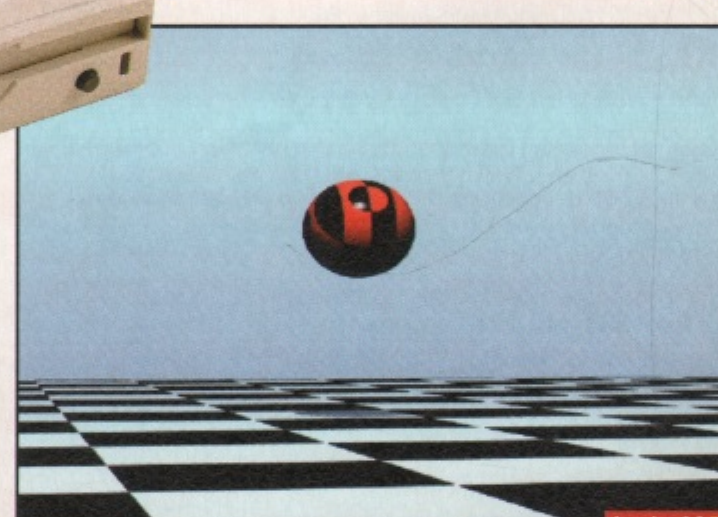

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The Big Red Adventure



The iron curtain has fallen and the ex-Soviet Union is open for business. Your job is to guide Doug the computer nerd (don't worry, no-one is implying anything, this guy uses PCs) on his quest for the biggest piece of business of them all – stealing the Czar's crown!

How to load

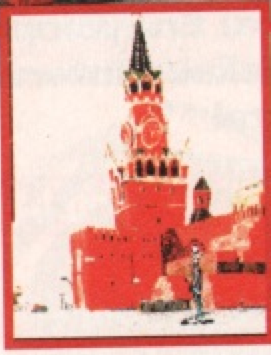
Simple! Just boot up from hard drive, whack the disk in the floppy and you are already half way there. Double click on the disk icon and drag the icon called Drag_me_to_HD_and_click to wherever on your hard drive you would like the demo drawer to be placed. Without removing the floppy disk from the drive, double click on the icon and as if by magic The Big Red Adventure will be installed to your hard drive! Great, huh?











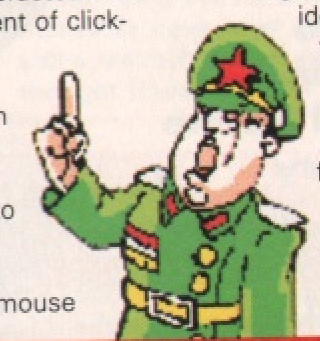
The Big Red Adventure is almost a good name. It is Big, and it is an Adventure; it is not however, Red. This is, however, rather lucky, because if the whole thing was red, you'd have a lot of trouble figuring out what was going on.

Control should be fairly straightforward to anyone who has tried their hand at adventure games. You move the mouse pointer around the screen and when it passes over an object you can interact with. A piece of text will appear telling you what the object is. Don't worry, it's not all in cyrillic!

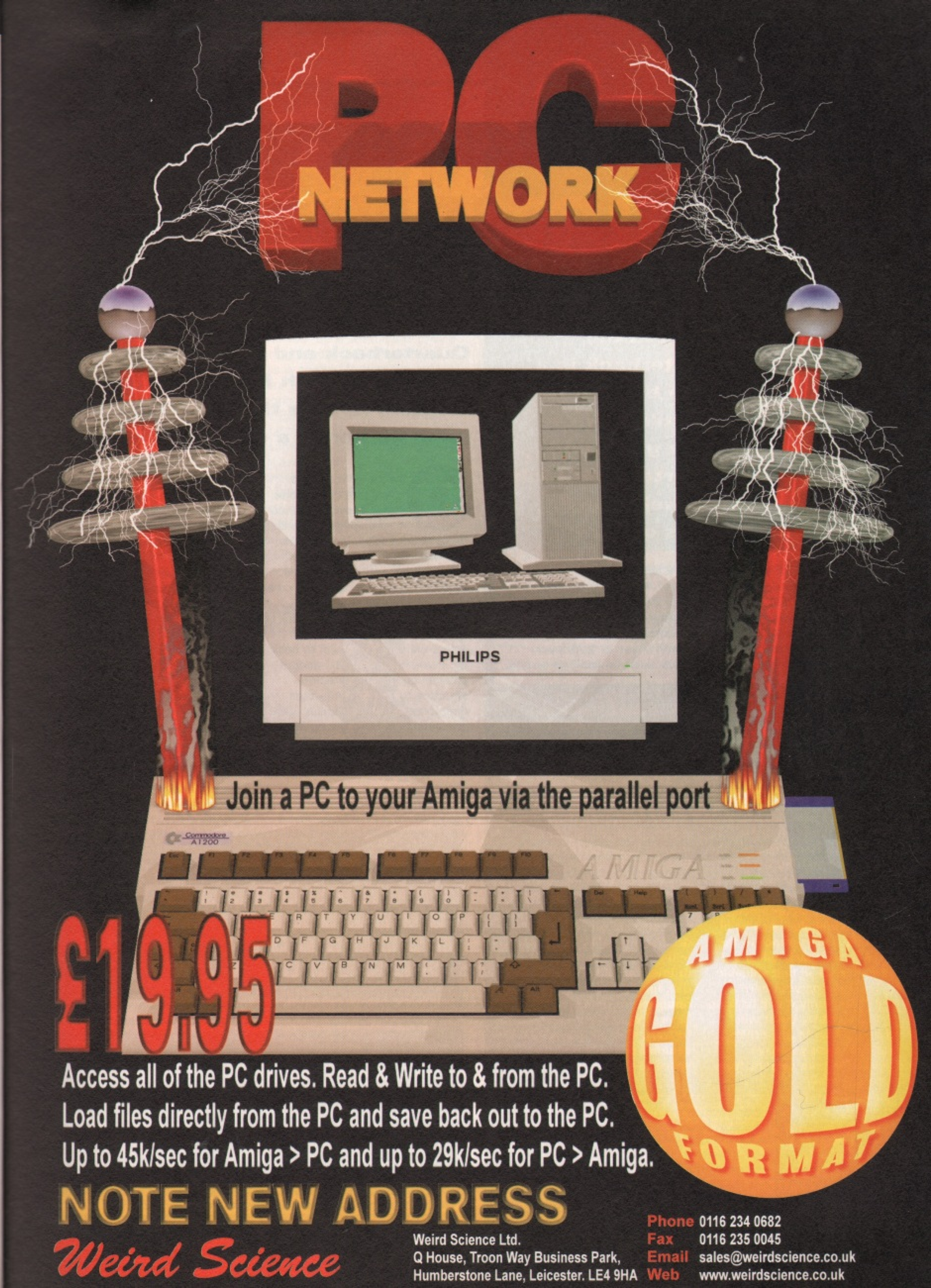
Objects can be interacted with by the simple expedient of clicking on them with the left mouse button. If you click anywhere on the screen where there is not a named object, Doug will try to walk there instead.

For more complex interaction, the right mouse button can be held down. This brings up an icon menu. The top line of the icon menu contains actions it is possible for you to perform on an object. Below that is the inventory of objects you are carrying. These can also be used upon objects you come across. Let's try it out... hold the button down, slide the pointer to the envelope, then release. A small envelope will appear next to the pointer. Drag the pointer over to Doug and you will notice the words "open envelope" appearing. Click the left button and, surprisingly, the letter is open! Look in your inventory and you'll find what was in it.

Right, now you have the idea, you can get on and figure out the rest for yourselves. And if you are impressed, you can buy the full game for under twenty quid. Power Computing are the suppliers, give them a call on 01234 851500.



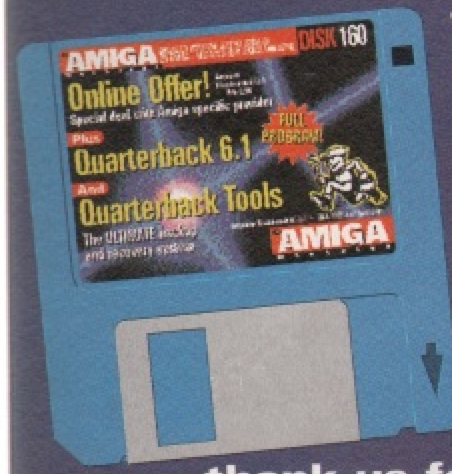




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Quarterback and Quarterback Tools

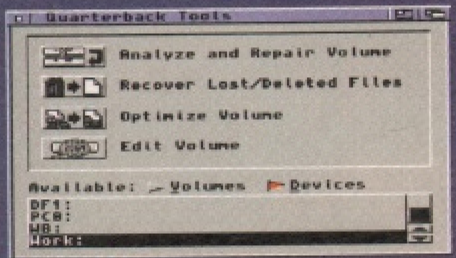


There just isn't any competition. Quarterback is a quite brilliant back-up utility. We've even given you Quarterback tools as well. You'll thank us for this one!

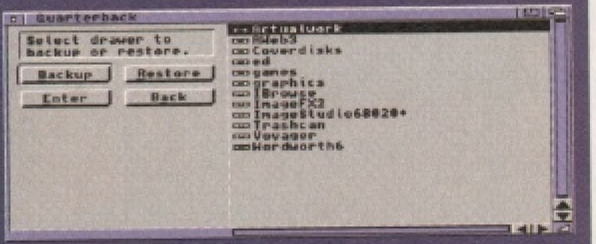
Quarterback and Quarterback tools come with full instructions on disk, but for those who want to jump in, here's a quick overview.

Loading instructions

As usual, write protect your floppy first. Boot up from your hard drive, stick in the disk, and open it up. Double click on the install icon and away you go. Installation is very simple: just tell the installer where you want the software installed and let it get on with it. You can choose to install either or both packages. Follow the on-screen instructions and you can't go wrong.



Quarterback is the ultimate backup utility. Hard disks are the business – computing without one is not a very fun experience these days. But hard drives go the way of all flesh (or indeed all metal), and will alas become ill or even die. Quarterback to the rescue! Quarterback will allow you to back up all that valuable data you keep on your hard drives. Commonly it will back up onto floppy disks, but it will happily back up to any other storage medium you have connected to your system, from Zips to a second hard drive. To save time you can also do incremental backups which only backs up whatever has been added since the last time you backed up your data.



Quarterback Tools is an impressive and powerful suite of disk manipulation tools. The most common use of Quarterback is recovering files which you have accidentally deleted or changed your mind about. However, it can also repair damaged disks and recover data you thought had been lost. There are also a range of power tools such as a sector editor – take care with this or risk permanently losing the software on your hard drive – and a disk optimizer and a whole selection of bonus utilities for all sorts of general disk functions. Check the page opposite for details but you'll have to read the on-disk guide to learn how all this works. We couldn't possibly find the space to explain it all here.

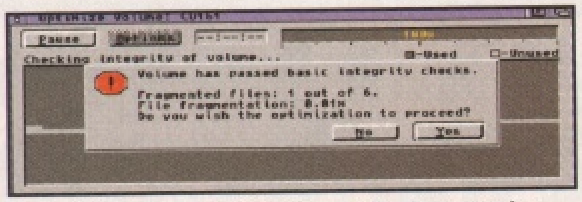
Once in a while hard disks bite the big one. It has happened twice in the space of the last three months to us in the office, and Mat and Andrew have both spent long hours recreating lost Workbench set-ups. Oh if only we had backed up our drives, eh?

Backing up with Quarterback is easy. Fire up the program and select the drive you want to back up. If you hit the "enter" gadget you can go into the directory structure to back up individual directories. Hit the "backup" gadget, select OK from the option screen, and Quarterback will scan through the disk and present you with a list of all the files and drawers in the location you have selected. Each has a tick or tag mark next to it to indicate that it will be backed up. You can deselect anything you don't need archived. Hit backup and it will figure out how many disks it will take to back up the whole lot and wait for your confirmation before it gets going.

There are a lot of options you can select while doing this. You'll have to read the on-disk help for full instructions. When you have chosen the device you want preserved, click on backup. You are presented with an options screen. From here you can select where the backup goes to. Normally it will back up to however many floppy drives you have connected, but you can choose to back up to other devices, too. If you wanted to back up to a Zip drive configured as unit 3 on a SCSI chain, you would first click on Tape/removables, then select SCSI.DEVICE (or whatever is appropriate) in the device box and change the unit box to read 3. Just above the click boxes the "Destination" line should then read something along the lines of "Destination: Zip disk 88Mb". The rest is as before. Simple, huh? There is a whole lot more, but you'll have to read the manual first before you get into that.

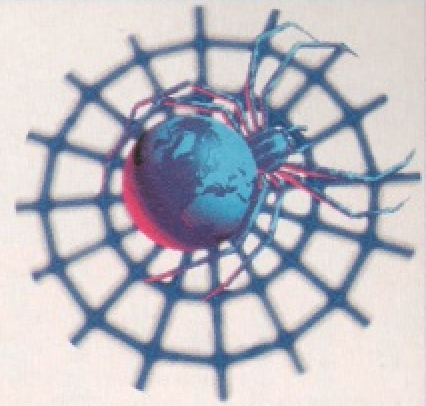
Quarterback Tools is such a complex suite of software that it is barely possible to touch on it in such a small space. You are strongly advised to read the instructions. The main program has four major functions. Analyze/repair can fix checksum errors and mark out bad blocks, Recover Lost Files allows you to undelete, Optimize makes your disks quicker to read, and Edit Volume allows you to edit the raw data on your disks. This is very powerful, but dangerous if you don't know what you're doing!

Also included are Replicator, a powerful disk duplicating utility, Locator for finding files on your hard drive, Encrypter for scrambling files, Disk and File eraser for permanent and secure erasure of disks or files, keystroke finder for locating those unusual characters on your keyboard and Braincloud which renders disks temporarily unavailable.



▲ Optimization speeds disks by reducing fragmentation.

Online Offer!



Not only has coverdisk 160 the brilliant Quarterback bundle but it contains a small public domain terminal package called JPTerm. We'll need this to download the CU NetConnect 'Lite' software to go with the Total Internet Solution feature on page 20. The whole software archive fits on about five floppy disks so, sadly, there wasn't enough space to put it on the disk edition. It is on the CD-ROM edition of course.

Installation is pretty simple: drag the obviously named Drag_Me_to_HD_and_click icon to where you want to install JPTerm, ie to your Work: partition. Click on it and you'll see JPTerm being unarchived onto your hard drive. Close the drive window, reopen it and the Drag_Me icon will have disappeared to be replaced by a JPTerm directory.

Making sure that the modem is plugged in, powered up and connected to your Amiga's serial port, open the JPTerm directory and click on JPTerm itself. The first time you run JPTerm it will copy a library to your system partition. This is needed for transferring files. You will be greeted by a phone book in JPTerm. Click on the BBS that seems to be most local to you, and the package will automatically make the modem dial and shortly you should be connected to the chosen BBS.

Follow the BBS' online instructions to register your name and so on. Now you should be able to find an option to download the CU NetConnect Lite package. This will vary from BBS to BBS, so alas we can't go into it in more detail. When you've done that, select Download from the transfer menu of JPTerm. A new window will appear and display the progress of the download. This may take as long as half an hour on a 28800 baud modem so be patient!

Now that you have the archive, extract it from the Shell. Use the UnLZX extractor present on the cover disk.
Perform the following in the Shell, pressing Return where indicated:

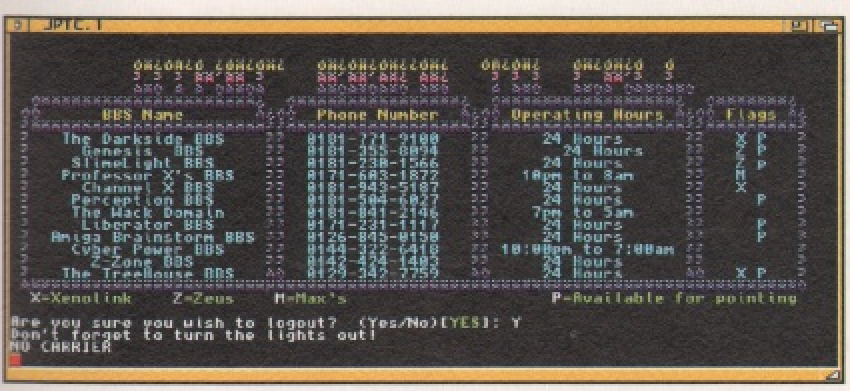
```
CD Work:[Return]
CU161:UnLZX x
Work:JPTerm/CU
NetConnect.lzx [Return]
```

Replace Work: with any temporary drive with 10Mb free. Replace the section on the next line, after the x, with the full path to where you downloaded the CU_NetConnect.lzx archive. Now you should have a directory in the destination drive. Open it and run the Installer. More instructions on installing NetConnect can be found in the Internet feature starting on page 20.

BBSs to get NetConnect from.

BBS NAME	PHONE NUMBER	SYSOP
The Machine BBS	0181 8132954	Aaron Thorne
Darkside BBS	0181 7719100	Robert Dale
Last Tango	0181 2416442	Tom Periera
Frost Free	01484 842341	Dave Naylor
Demon Fears Amiga	0161 6273360	Mike Handley
Amiga Shack	01937 531724	Chris Elsworth
Echoes BBS	01276 31261	Steve Barnet
5 Star Amiga	01237 477072	Stephen Harris
Borg Homeworld	0113 2253772	Paul Green
FWiBBle! (Ireland)	061 331423	Damien Mc Kenna (12am-8am *only*)





Order form

In order to apply for a Wirenet account, please fill out this form and post it with your cheque/PO for £30, payable to Wirenet to:

Wirenet Amiga Internet, 39 Larch Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 2AZ

Name:...

Telephone:...

Address:...

....

....

You will be allocated an Internet address which takes the form of userid@hostname.u-net.com
Please give your choice of userid and hostname:

Userid (2-8 lower case characters, eg tom):...

Your Hostname (2-12 lower case characters, eg myhouse):...

Your Hostname 2nd choice: (used if 1st choice is taken)...

Password (6-8 lower case letters):...

Standing Order Mandate:

Bank:...

Bank Address:...

....

Sort code:.................. **Account number:**..................

Account name:...

Please pay the sum of £14.25 into the account below on the 1st/15th* of each month, beginning with the month of..................

Sort code: 20-91-48 **Account number: 70162094** **Account name: Wirenet**

Signature:...

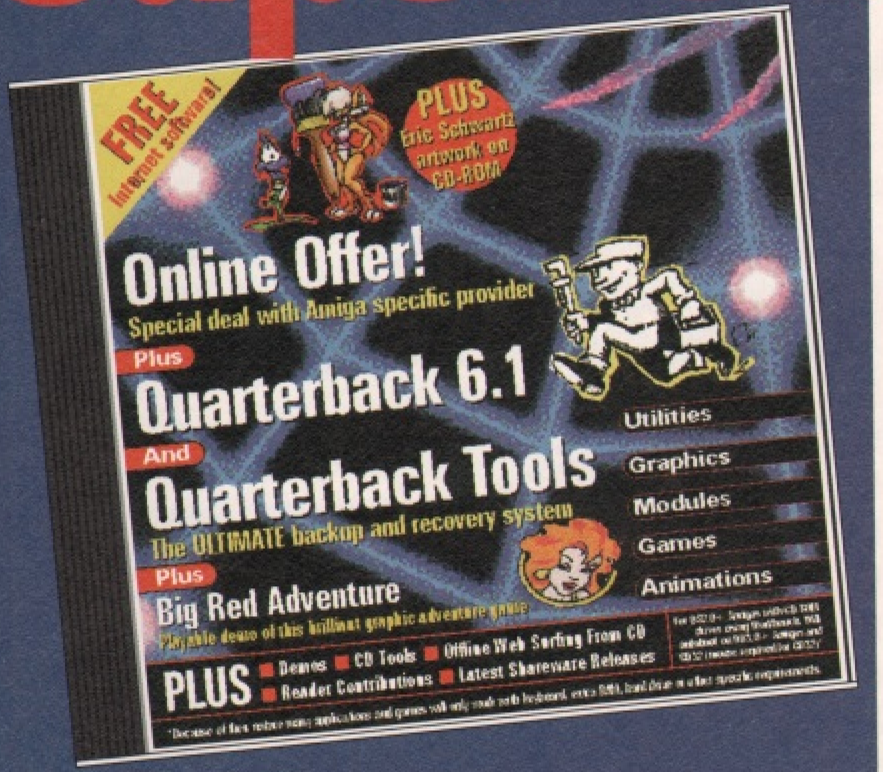
Date:..................**Telephone:**..................

*** The standing order must be paid on the date soonest before the renewal is due, ie if you subscribe before the 15th, then select the 1st. If you subscribe after the 15th, select the 15th. Your subscription renewal date remains on monthly intervals from the date the account is opened. Please make sure this is completed correctly, otherwise your application will be delayed.**

CD-ROM

Super CD-ROM 12

Every month it gets better. This time you get the brilliant Quarterback suite along with the usual wonders.



Welcome to CUCD12. Once again we've got an unfeasible amount of brilliant software for your Amiga. If you don't have CD drive yet, read this to see what you are missing.

CUCD12 can be booted from a CD32 or an A1200/4000 with adequate CD32 emulation. To allow you to use this CD just as well when you boot up from your own Workbench, we have included the INITCD icon, which will make various assigns to allow software to run from the CD. It also initiates MUI and the NewIcons systems – so don't be surprised if the look of your Workbench suddenly changes. It is all temporary and can be removed by clicking on InitCD again. To help you find your away around the CD, there is a DOCS.GUIDE, which connects you to pretty much every text document on the CD, and INDEX, a search tool which allows you to search the CD for a text string. Like everything on the CD, click on them to activate.

Making things work

Click on a picture icon and a viewer loads up and displays the image. Click on a mod and a modplayer pops up and plays the tune. As much as possible of the software will run from the CD as well. However, some things on the disc won't run when you click on them. There are several reasons for this. If it is a picture or animation you may not have enough memory. If it is a demo it may clash with your system. If it is a utility it may need to be installed and so on. If a program doesn't activate, and no error message comes up, read the documentation.

It can get complex with games and demos. Many are written in an OS illegal fashion, which means that they may not work on every set up. Run the bare minimum Workbench and try them. If this still doesn't work, boot with no startup sequence and activate the program from the shell. You will need to know AmigaDOS well for this.

On the disks



Quarterback 6.1 Suite

The best backup utility on the market, and it comes with the brilliant disk/file recovery system Quarterback Tools, too. Never lose a single file again!

The Big Red Adventure

This four screen demo lets you get a taster of the brilliant new adventure game from Dynabyte and Power Computing. Help Doug the computer nerd on his quest to pinch the Czar's crown. Revel in the lovely artwork and partake of some merry Muscovite madness! See page six for more.

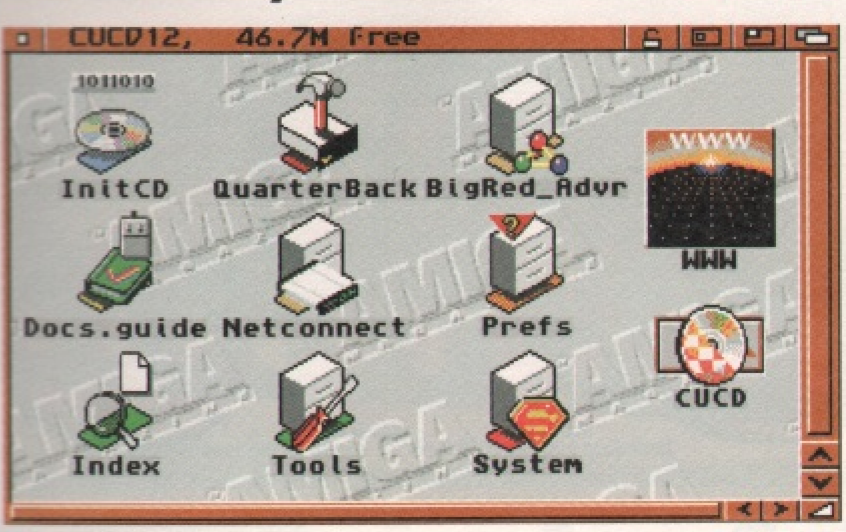


Gateway press conference

No audio tracks this month, the whole thing is just one *vast* collection of Amiga software. Not that this means that there is nothing to listen to. As well as the standard selection of MIDI files and mods you have come to expect from the world's best CD-ROMs, this month there is something really special...

By now you probably know that there was a press conference before the World of Amiga show. Some of you may have read the text of Petro Tyschtchenko's speech on the Amiga International web site, but we've brought you the entire press conference in MPEG audio form. It's in the Magazine drawer: just double click it to hear it! On slow processors you may find that the sound pauses every now and then. Integer and FPU versions are included.

What's in your drawers?



Root: The root directory of CUCD12 is set up like a Workbench disk, with all the standard directories – C, Devs, Libs, Fonts and so on. You will find that these directories are all nicely packed full of files you can use on your own Workbench if you want.

There are plenty of libraries, fonts and so on. If you want to copy anything across to your own system, just use a directory utility such as Directory Opus.

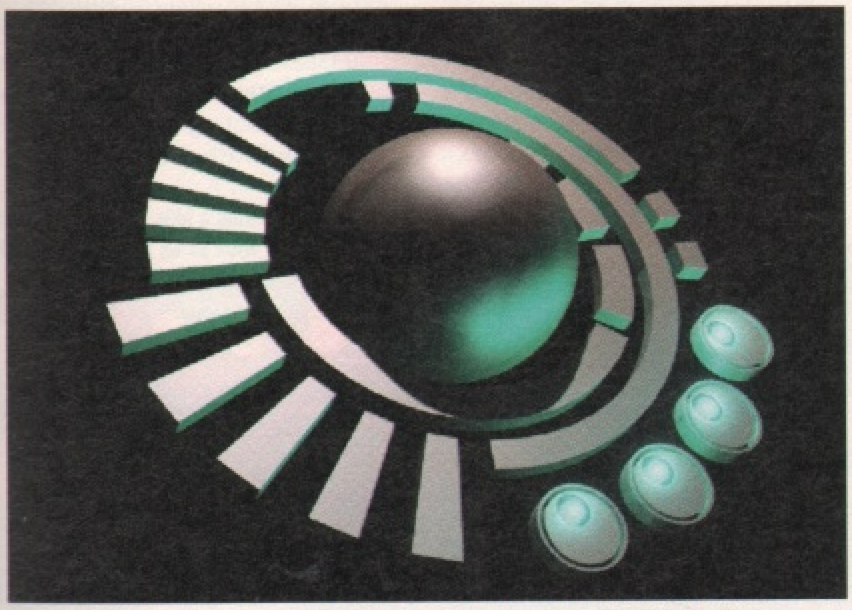
The Big Red Adventure: Ready to play straight from the CD. Just click the icon and get started – there are full instructions of page six.

Quarterback: Yet another brilliant commercial package for you to add to your collection. A standard installer will install this to your hard drive. For more details, see page eight.

System: Delitracker, Hippoplayer, GmPlay, NewIcons, ParNET, Flick, Viewtek, VirusZ and more have moved into a new drawer called CDsupport in the System directory. MUI and the standard Workbench system files remain in the parent.







▲ Yet another treasure trove of top Amiga software is yours with CUCD12. Well over 600Mb of data includes graphics, utilities, mods, games, demos and web sites.

Tools: A fairly standard Workbench tools drawer.

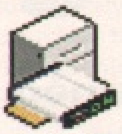
Prefs: Standard Preferences drawer with NewIcon prefs.

Utilities: Multiview, Clock, Toolalias and some NewIcons utilities.

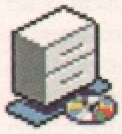
WWW: Demo versions of the major Web browsers; Ibrowse 1.1 and Voyager NG are here plus the brand new AWeb 3.0 demo. There are also pages to browse without a modem! All you have to do is click on the Show_WWW icon and then select which browser you want to use when asked.

CUCD: Here's where you'll find the really good stuff.

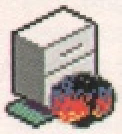
Online: A nice big section of useful software for the online Amigan. If you have been convinced by this month's Internet feature, then you'll find a lot in this drawer to help you out. Also a big collection of Usenet news for you to browse through.



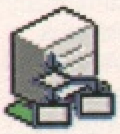
CD-ROM: Due to the problems with CUCD10, we've got a special installer for AmiCDFS2. This will update older CD file systems to modern standards. Also the contents of the latest Aminet CDs, IdeFIX, Quick Sampler and even more CDIDs.



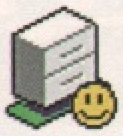
Graphics: AGA Morph, CDXL, the latest CybergraphX drivers, a Picasso96 emulator for CybergraphX, an HTML gallery creator, RTGMaster and more!



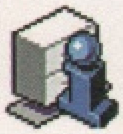
Programming: Lots of GUI stuff to get your teeth into with the complete user and developer files for the Triton GUI system, the GadToolsBox, and as an extra bonus, the full ADE binary tree.



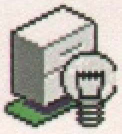
Demos: Always a favourite, this month we bring you the latest and greatest from the world's most active demo scene!



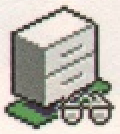
Information: STCCGguide. Mean anything to you? If so great, if not, well that's why we give you the information in the first place! Lots in here.



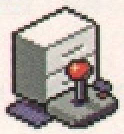
Utilities: Stock market analysis from Amibroker, some directory utilities, the new version of the omnipotent MultiCX, a collection of the latest virus checkers, VINCEd, the potentially KingCon beating Shell replacement and more.



Readers: Readers contributions from around the world. We get more than we have time to deal with, but we're always looking for more! Expect a Readers contributions special in the near future...



Games: The latest version of Bolderdash, Destructive Poker, Eldritch, Omega, Train Driver, more Worms samples, and a demo of SkimmersAGA

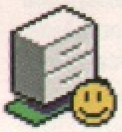


Magazine: Here you'll find Wired World bits. Also the complete Amiga International / Gateway 2000 press conference from the World of Amiga show.

Previews: Wanna see some Schwartz? To tie in with this month's interview, you can check out this collection – and check out the CD reviews page for details of how to get more.



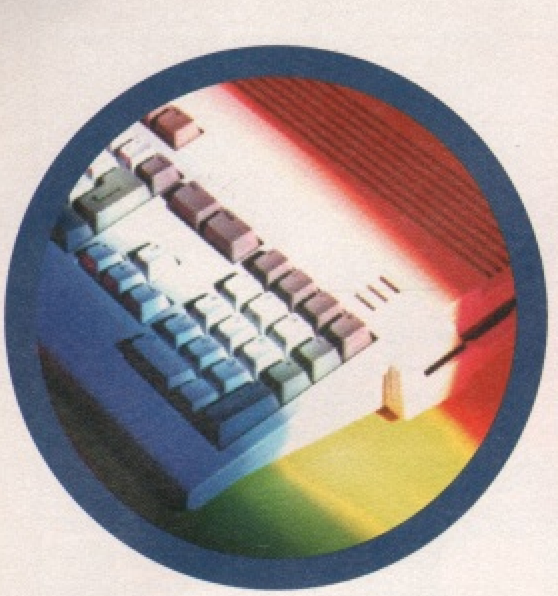
Sound: Plenty to keep music fans happy here, including the latest AHI retargetable audio system, AlgoMusic, MIDI files, stacks of music mods and lots more!



If your CUCD does not load

If your CD does not load contact Diskxpress on 01451 810788. If they advise that the CD is faulty send it along with a SAE to: CU Amiga Magazine Disk Returns, Diskxpress, 7 Willow Court, Bourton Industrial Park, Bourton on the water, Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ.

Please note that some CDs will not autoboot on systems other than CD32s, so try loading it from Workbench first.



News

The World of Amiga 1997

The Amiga event of the year turned out to be a great success for all involved. CU Amiga was there...

With ink still wet on the Gateway-Amiga contract, the 1997 World of Amiga show rolled into town over the weekend of May 17th and 18th, bringing with it thousands of enthusiastic Amiga fans, the major players on the scene and no less than Gateway and the newly re-named Amiga International themselves. A joint Gateway-Amiga International press conference also preceded the show on the Friday afternoon (see page 14 for the full story on that).

Held at London's Novotel venue, site of previous Amiga and Commodore shows, World of Amiga was granted more floor space than last year's hopelessly over crowded event, although predictably it couldn't match the double-floor capacity witnessed at the shows of the late 80s. Despite clashing with the FA Cup Final, Saturday's exhibition was very well attended. Opening time saw a healthy queue stretching the length of the dark and grotty entrance area beneath the main Novotel hotel.

TFX takes off

Once inside, showgoers were greeted with a grab-bag of exhibitors, ranging from market stall types knocking out cheap software and peripherals to pin-striped show cases of new technology. Not to be outdone, CU Amiga's highly interactive stand wowed the crowds with a combo of TFX (really!), Mat Bettinson's diverse high-tech shenanigans, a portable Amiga (not a PAWS) and a special guest appearance from phase 5 showing their PowerUp cards in the UK for the first time, not to mention the editorial team on hand for various.

While the size of the show might suggest Town of Amiga would be a more apt name, the 'World' tag was certainly justified, with a truly international turn-out. Exhibitors included Nova Design and Finale Developments from the USA, with Amiga International, phase 5, PIOS and Individual Computers from Germany, while visitors came from the far corners of Europe and beyond, like the one who came to London for the weekend purely to cover the show for his local Amiga user group in Greece. To give you an idea of who and what was at the show, here's a brief walk-around, stopping off at a random selection of stands.



▲ Exclusive guests on the CU Amiga stand, phase 5 knocked 'em dead with PowerUp.



▲ HiQ's Steve Jones demonstrates the amazing Siamese RTG system.

Silly prices

Through the doors, and immediately Guildhall Leisure's stand made its presence known, like a model of Manhatten with stacks of games like skyscrapers being sold at silly prices. Microprose Grand Prix, one of their latest re-releases, was their biggest seller.

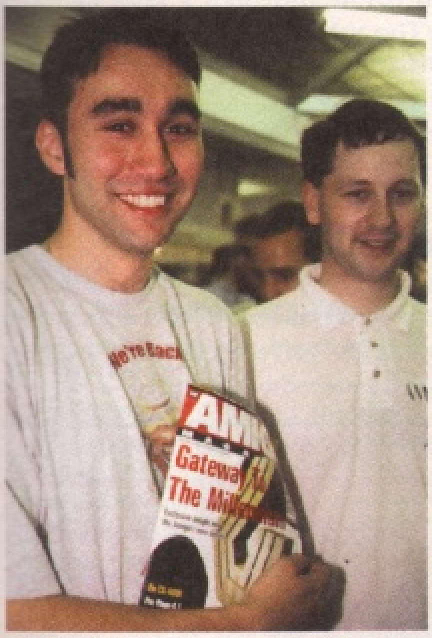
Also catching them early were HiSoft, attracting good crowds to their stand with the new fast seri-



▼ L-R: CU Amiga's Kirstin meets the public, the crowds become a blur, and Tony gets air-sick as he demonstrates TFX.



▲ L-R: PPaint finds a fan on the Amiga International stand, phase 5's Wolf Dietrich gets technical, and CU Amiga's Mat Bettinson points out his World of Amiga goatee whilst broadcasting the show over the Internet.



▲ Happy punters were in plentiful supply at the show, most of them CU readers.

al adapter called the Whippet creating quite a buzz. The CD version of Cinema 4D was also making its debut. Get CU Amiga next month for reviews of both of these.

CD-ROM kings Epic Marketing were banging them out at giveaway prices, including some excellent old CD32 games for a ridiculous £2.

Larry Hickmott's LH Publishing were promoting Draw Studio and Pagestream 3. Also on the stand were David Haynie's disk recovery program Disksalv 4 and manuals for recent CU Amiga coverdisks Image Studio and ProPage.

Who's that on the Wizard Developments stand? No less than the endearingly named Kermit Woodall from Nova Design showing off Image FX! Kermit was joined by GP Software's Greg Perry, converting the masses to Opus 5.5, and IssreeSoft were also there with Turbo Print 5. And what of Wizard themselves? They seemed to be doing a nice line in shifting brand new Amigas, among other things, one of which saved our bacon as we turned up with one too few! Cheers Shaun!

Just around the corner was the CU Amiga stand, mobbed all day Saturday and still arguably the busiest stand all through Sunday. Lured not only by the charms of the CU Amiga team, crowds formed around the first ever public showing of TFX (boosted by a hastily purloined 50mHz 030 card from Power Computing) with another major first: phase 5 dropping jaws with their unfeasibly fast PowerUp accelerators performing amazing feats such as full screen silky smooth software decoded MPEG anims running on Workbench. Further techno lust was satisfied by Mat's live transmission of the show over the Internet, a cute portable Amiga and what turned into a two day technical Q+A session. Phew!

Gamers were well serviced by Direct Software, who came with a huge range of games and news of more to come, but conspicuous by its absence was their 'Power Amiga' system. They were hoping to debut their souped up 68060 based tower Amiga, but last minute problems with the sourcing of their cases caused a now resolved delay. Direct say they have had enormous public interest for the Power Amigas, including inquiries from the BBC and Sky.

Amiga International

The biggest stand on the show was appropriately that of the company which is at the heart of this whole industry, the newly bought out Amiga International. With no new products, the stand was instead showing off the capabilities of the platform. Micronik had a strong presence with an impressive collection of seriously powered-up tower Amigas. When you pass a true colour ultra high resolution Workbench screen, the top bar reading 2Mb Chip, 126Mb Fast, you know you are in the presence of a pretty awesome Amiga. Much of the business on the Amiga International stand was done behind the scenes in the 'inner sanctum' hospitality suite. Amiga Internation's head Petro Tsytchenko had a busy schedule of talks with people from the industry over the weekend, and impressed many with his seriousness about working with other companies and getting the market firing again.

HiQ's Siamese RTG was something of a show stopper, displaying an unprecedented connectivity between PC and Amiga systems. Crowds were being wowed by an Amiga Workbench being displayed on a Windows95 screen, leading to many jokes about how amazing it was that someone had at last managed to put an operating system on a PC. The future significance of this product was indicated by the presence of a Siamese system on the Amiga International stand.

AG PIOS were showing the TransAM and Maxxtrem systems we looked at in our May issue. Looking at the moment rather lik BeBox / Macintosh clones, the PIOS machines are designed to be Multiple OS systems, and use a CHRP (Common Hardware Reference Platform) design to facilitate very open multi computing. Amiga compatibility will come in with the developent of a PIOS/Amiga hybrid based on the Siamese and through the Amiga OS like pOS in development by proDAD.

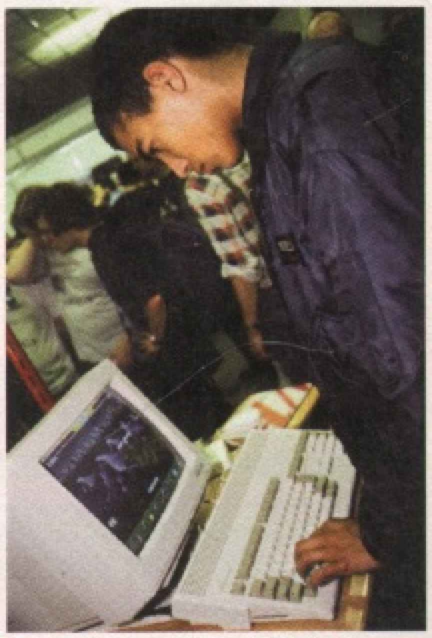


▲ Despite the doubters, TFX was indeed on show and playable at the CU Amiga stand.

Power Computing roped in the talents of ex-Commodore UK heads David Pleasance and Jonathan Anderson to help service the baying crowds appetite for accelerators and other upgrades. CU Superstar award winning adventure game The Big Red Adventure attracted a lot of attention too and was a good seller on Power's stand and several others

The aftermath

After the dust had settled on the weekend, general opinion was that it had been a great success. Sales were reported as healthy, and there was no shortage of enthusiasm. Plans are already afoot for another World of Amiga, pencilled in for a pre-Christmas December slot. We'll keep you informed of future developments.



▲ Subsidence was reported to be a problem on some stands.

Gateway Unveils Plans for Amiga



▲ Jim and Petro spell out the future...

Encouraging but realistic words came from the first ever Amiga International press conference...

The Press Conference on CD



Just pop the CD in your drive and take a look in the Magazine drawer. The whole conference is stored in MPEG audio form, and can be heard by simply clicking on the icon.

After many stops and starts, it looks like we may just have got everything we wanted. Amiga has a new owner and they are very big, very professional and very serious.

On the 16th of May at the Novotel in London, Amiga International held a press conference at which future plans for the Amiga were outlined by Amiga International president Petro Tyschtschenko and Gateway 2000's Senior VP in charge of global marketing, Jim Taylor.

Jim Taylor spoke first, introducing the company which has bought the Amiga, and assuring everyone that Gateway are serious about their acquisition and feel a strong affinity with the Amiga community. There was scepticism from some at the conference, a legacy of the confusion of recent years, but most people were impressed by a very strong presentation.



Petro Tyschtschenko then took the stand to outline the future of Amiga International. There were no announcements of new machines, but most observers felt this was in fact rather reassuring. Jim Taylor kept telling us that they had only owned the company for about 20 minutes, and anything too specific would undoubtedly have been jumping the gun.

The Future

Amiga International will concentrate on the release of a new operating system, and Petro stated that he believes the work is mostly done, thanks to the efforts of shareware programmers. OS4 could include programs such as Executive, MUI, NewIcons, MCP and KingCon.

The other important area will be broad licensing, allowing third party developers to produce true Amiga products. There will be a new openness in the Amiga industry, with Amiga International supporting the Amiga community directly and co-operating in R&D and technical matters with other companies. Amiga International are willing to see where the market leads the technology, but stressed the need for the Amiga platform to move to industry standard components in order to keep production costs down.

Investment Policy

Having discussed the future with Petro Tyschtschenko after the show, a promising picture formed. Gateway 2000 seem to have a genuine and serious commitment to the success of the Amiga and are willing to invest in its future. Gateway want to see the Amiga profitable in the long term and realise that this means investment and marketing in the short term.

Gateway's realise that the Amiga has a fiercely loyal user base, and this is why they bought it. Gateway's policy is to encourage user loyalty through good service, and it was the amazing loyalty of the Amiga market that they wanted to buy into. They also believe that the market is lead by enthusiasts, and view the Amiga as being the ultimate enthusiasts machine. Gateway reps at World of Amiga were very impressed at the general level of understanding Amiga users have.

Amiga OS for all

R&D is the number one priority, and a PowerPC port of AmigaDOS is foremost in Amiga International's plans. They want to avoid a split in the Amiga market, and this ideally means PIOS1 and A\Boxes running genuine AmigaDOS. The OS and custom hardware will be widely licensed. Amiga International will be strongly supporting the likes of Micronik with their tower systems.

> **"It has truly been the Amiga community that has kept Amiga alive"**
>
> Petro Tyschtschenko, manager of AI.

There are no plans to release the Walker. They do not see it as forward looking enough, and seem to have little interest in providing stopgap hardware. If, however, a third party manufacturer wants it, they are willing to talk.

Most impressive is the commitment Amiga International are promising to Amiga developers. Petro Tyschtschenko spent the entire weekend in meetings – Amiga International appear to want to give everyone help to keep the Amiga market buzzing, and with Gateway behind them, they certainly have the clout to make it count.

Gateway and Amiga International need time and patience from the Amiga community; given that we can look forwards to a real renaissance.



Marriage made in heaven?

What have Gateway in common with the Amiga? According to Jim Taylor, quite a lot. Gateway believe that enthusiasts lead the market, and think that profits come from offering value and service. They think of themselves as "maverick of the herd" with ambitions to use the PC boom to their advantage then put their own spin on it.

Eyetech's Summer Sizzlers Full A1200 towers from £119.95; 16 speed CDPlus system £199.95; High speed A1200 serial port £49.95; Accelerators: '030/25MHz/MMU/FPU £79.95, '030/33Mhz/MMU/FPU £89.95; '040/25MHz £189.95, '060/50MHz £394.95; Data/fax modems from £29.95; SX32Pro-33SE - £299.95; SX32Pro-50 £349.95; Enhanced PSU's from £39.95; 100MB bootable IDE Zip drives £119.95

The Top-Rated Eyetech *CDPlus* for the A1200 2-speed and 8-speed CDROM drives



The CDPlus and SyQuest EZ135 drives. The IDE Zip Drive is the same size as the EZ135

- 2- or 8- speed external CDROM unit in quality CE-approved case with heavy duty PSU
- Leaves trapdoor free for accelerators / memory expansion and the PCMCIA slot free for digitisers, modems, samplers etc
- Option to add additional HD's, CDRoms, SyQuests, *IDE Zips*, Jazs, ATAPI tape streamers etc powered from the CDPlus unit
- Comes with special Eyetech *'060-compatible* Mk2 4-device EIDE buffered interface board - easily fitted in minutes with no cutting/drilling (Note that IDE CDROMS *must never* be directly connected to the A1200 without a buffered interface)
- Gold plated audio phono sockets* at rear and front panel headphone socket and volume control

What do the reviewers say?

Amiga User International - 97% *"... It all worked faultlessly ... "*

Amiga Format - 96% *"... An absolutely superb bit of kit.."*

Amiga Shopper - 90% *"... This is a quality product..."*

Amazing Value - Prices Down
8-speed - *only £179.95*

NEW!* 16-Speed - 2.4MB/s (max) - *only £199.95

The *CDPlus* is also available as a full kit but without CD mechanism - so you can fit your own - for £119.95



The CDPlus MiniTower & Desktop cases (styles may vary)

Considering a PowerStation?

The CDPlus is now available with a, 230W, CE-approved, PC MiniTower* or Desktop* case (which can also power your A1200) - *for only £25 extra*

NEW! (*Not on DT/MT/FT) ...Or get a full A1200 Custom Tower* & fitting kit for your A1200-motherboard - with 250W PSU - *for only £99.95 extra* (*as an alternative to the regular CDPlus case)

SX32Mk2 & SX32Pro *Internal* Expansion for the CD32

The SX32 Pro is now shipping! Make your CD32 into a high powered, portable Amiga!

The SX32Pro and SX32Mk2 add ...

- 33 or 50MHz '030 MMU CPU and FPU socket (33Mhz FPU socket only on the SX32Mk2)
- Simm socket for up to 64MB of 32 bit fast (60/70ns) RAM (up to 8MB fast (70ns) RAM on the SX32Mk2)
- Buffered IDE interface for internal 2.5" hard drive *and* second hard drive, SyQuest, Jaz *or even 8 speed CDROM* (optional extra on the SX32 Mk2)
- Sockets for RGB video (23 pin), VGA video (15 pin), Parallel port (25 pin), Serial port (25 pin), Floppy disk port (23 pin)
- Jumper-selectable for PC or Amiga keyboard input (external adapter on SX32Mk2)

... to the CD32's existing mouse, joystick, keyboard, audio, RF, composite video and SVHS ports.

What do the reviewers say?

Amiga User Int'l	*"95% - Definitely Recommended"*
Amiga Computing	*"90% - A Dream to Use." Blue Chip Award*
Amiga Format	*"96% - Absolutely Top Notch" Gold Award*



The SX32Pro

SX32Mk2 - *sale price* - *£189.95*
SX32Pro-50 - *sale price* - *£349.95*

Genuine Amiga 89-key compact keyboard *£34.95*
SX32 floppy, hard drives 20MB-1.1GB, RAM - *Please ring*

All models include full pictorial fitting instructions,WB3.0 & utilities on CD and 'Click-and-Go' hard drive installation diskette

WOA Show Special Limited Quantity - SX33Pro-33SE. A Special Edition SX32 Pro with 33Mhz '030EC processor (no MMU) - *Just £299.95*

AMIGA HEALTH WARNING

If you have recently fitted - or intend to fit - an IDE/ATAPI CDROM to your A1200 *(other than an Eyetech CDPlus unit)* **without** a buffered interface then your Amiga is in risk of serious damage arising in the future. The A1200 - unlike A4000's and PC's - has *NO* internal IDE buffering. On the A1200 the IDE interface connects *directly* to the A1200 processor chip which itself has insufficient output to drive more than one IDE/ATAPI device (and only then on a short data cable) for any sustained time period. To the best of our knowledge the *Eyetech CDPlus* is the only A1200 ATAPI CDROM supplied with a buffered interface as standard. We are now making this 4-device buffered interface available separately for use with other kits and D-I-Y CDROM installations. At only £39.95 it is a small price to pay to preserve your Amiga's health.

Mk2 interface now available - Compatible with all popular hard drives and accelerators - including '060 models

FOR YOUR A1200 TOWER CONVERSION

- Full tower case with mountings for A1200 motherboard & PCMCIA accessories with 250W PSU, A1200 psu connector, 10 (total) CD/HD/Zip/floppy bays and provision for fitting a standard PC motherboard or Zilslots. £119.95
- PC or A2000 A1200 keyboard adapter - no soldering or shield removal needed. £39.95
- 7 x Zorro II slots expansion board - including 2x video and 5 x PC ISA slots with accelerator pass-through. Fits most towers £179.95
- Replacement A1200 internal floppy drive mechanism with faceplate and interface for tower mounting £44.95
- Internal floppy drive extension ribbon cables (60 cm) to mount your internal drive in the full tower floppy drive bay £12.95
- External floppy drive (23m-23f) extension cables for external floppy drive to minitower/desktop floppy drive bay (60cm) £14.95
- Rewirable IEC plug for PC tower, PSU etc AC mains outlet £6.95



(*optional extras)

If you can use a screwdriver this could be your system!

EYETECH's ONE-STOP INTERNET SHOP

Internet packs
- **3 months unlimited local call access internet usage**, Internet reference book and full (but restricted usage) Internet software (TCP/IP, WWW, FTP, Email, Telnet, Term and IRC) £39.95
- Upgrade to full unrestricted software - **any ISP, Full TCP stack, IRC, FTP, Term, Mail, WWW browser with frames, Telnet, etc** £44.95

Modems
- 14.4 modem & psu £29.95
- 28.8modem, cables £69.95
- 33.6 modem, cables £89.95

Data & phone cables
- Modem cable (2m) £5.95
- 10m, 2way phone ext'n £12.95
- 1m modem lead FCC68-4/6 to UK BT phone plug £5.95

Amiga Drivers for Epson Printers and Scanners



Scanned / *printed output*

EnPrint for the Stylus ColourII/IIs/Pro/ProXL/200/500/600/800/820/1500
- Unbelievable photographic quality output
- 'Preferences' & stand-alone printing program

ScanQuix3 for all Epson scanners
- 24 bit scanning with full range of editing options
- 'Scan-to-disk' option in Jpeg or IFF formats
- Stand-alone use or integrates with your Art package (Photogenics, ImageFX, AdPro, XiPaint, Pagestream 3, DPaint5, ArtEffect, PPaint)
- ***Also available for HP, Mustek (Paragon) and Artec scanners***

EnPrint v2.1.3 - only £29.95
ScanQuix v3.0 - only £79.95

The Amazing Iomega *IDE* Zip Drive

Another first from Eyetech

- *Can be used in place of - or as well as* - the internal hard drive*
- *Use a different bootable cartridge for each application or family member*
- *Ideal for transferring multimedia data between Amigas and/or other platforms*
- ***Fits in any Amiga/desktop/minitower floppy drive bay or in external case***
- *The ideal way to backup your data*



The IDE Zip drive fitted in an A1200

Bare IDE Zip drive *(inc Eyetech ZipPrep tools)* **- Just £119.95**

100MB Zip cartridges just £14.95/1 or £39.95/3 (*A600/1200 buffered interface needed)

A1200 *InstantDrive* Hard Disk Kits

***InstantDrives* are *only* available from Eyetech**



"The fastest drive I have tested on any platform ...95%"
- David Taylor - Amiga Format February 1997

Important Note! 3.5" hard drives - even those described as *'Slim'* - are usually 1"/25mm high and ***will not*** fit in an A1200 without significant modifications to the case and metal shielding - which itself reduces the value of your computer. All ***InstantDrives*** from Eyetech are less than 20mm high and fit perfectly.

- Rated ***99%*** - AUI November 1996, ***95%*** - Amiga Format February 1997
- No hole drilling, case clipping, or shield removal required
- All drives are brand new with a 2 year warranty and come inclusive of full fitting kit and easy-to-follow pictorial instructions
- Ready-to-use with WB3.0 and over 45 top quality utilities installed and configured to the Toolsdaemon menu system.
- AV drives come with MMe multimedia authoring software preinstalled

2.5 GB AV (~3MB/s) - just £239.95

NEW **- Superfast1.75GB 3.5"tower drives - £169.95**

2.5" InstantDrives for the A600, A1200, SX32 & SX32 Pro

344MB	A 2.5" drive ideal for the SX32Mk2 and for the A1200/A600	£129.95
540MB	A fast, superslim drive with ample capacity for most users	£149.95
810MB	A superb, superslim drive ideal for users of serious applications	£179.95
1.08GB	The high performance superslim drive is ideal for power users	£209.95
1.8GB	This top-of-the-range superslim drive is perfect for the SX32Pro	£239.95

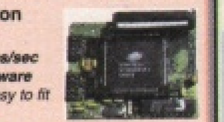
D-I-Y and Bargain Corner

Hard-to-find parts for your Amiga project

Hard drive cables and cases	
2.5"-2.5" 44-way hard drive cables for A600 & A1200	£9.95
2.5" 3x44-way hard drive cables for 2 x 2.5" drives (6cm+6cm)	£14.95
3.5" power & data cables for A600 & A1200	£14.95
3.5" full fitting kit for A600 & A1200 (contains ***everything***)	£24.95
3.5" external hard drive case	£19.95
3.5" removeable drive deluxe external HD case	£29.95
3 x 40-way IDE cable for 3.5" HD/CDROM ~85cm/2' 9"	£9.95
Custom 3 x 40 IDE cables to 1.5m/5' (enclose drawing)	£19.95
3.5" hard drive to 5.25" bay mounting adapters	£6.95
2.5" hard drive to 3.5" bay with 3.5" data/power cable adapters	£12.95
3.5" floppy/SyQuest/Zip drive to 5.25" bay mounting adapters	£6.95
40 pin m-f detachable data cable forexternal 3.5" HD/CDROM's	£12.95
Slimline external floppy/IDE SyQuest/IDE ZIP/IDE Jaz case	£12.95
CDROM cables, cases and interfaces	
IDE/ATAPI CDROM case with 40w PSU, audio & data connect's	£59.95
4-device buffered EIDE interface for A1200/A600	£39.95
4-device EIDE interface for A4000	£29.95
SCSI cable 25way 'D'(m)to 50way 'Centronics' (m) (1m)	£9.95
Audio & video cables and adapters	
3.5mm stereo jack plug to 2 x phono plugs for CDROM	£6.95
CDROM standard 4 pin inverted T audio connector & phono plugs	£9.95
Phono plug x 2 to phono plug/socket x 2 audio mixer leads	£6.95
2 x phono socket to phono plug mixer adapters (Gold **£3.50**)	£2.50
Stereo 2 x phono plug to 2 x phono plug 1.1m/4' (4.8m/16' £9.95)	£4.95
Power supplies and PC towers//desktops with integral psus	
Enhanced metal cased PSU for A600/A1200/CD32/CDROM/ external HD (fit your old lead - instructions provided)	£39.95
200W Ready-to-Go A500/600/1200 psu w/ Amiga, mains cables	£59.95
Mini-tower or desktop case with 200W/230W PSU, CD & HD/Zip bay, power lead connector block, resistor, cable restraint etc, & full instr'ns	£49.95
4-pin M-F extension cable from PSU to external HD/CD 0.9m/3'	£9.95
23 pin m floppy drive connector to 4 pin HD/CDROM power plug	£9.95
A1200 internal cooling fan - dissipate that extra power!	£14.95
VGA 23-15 pin adapter for A500/600/1200 (most monitors)	£12.95
23-15 pin buffered VGA adapter (all Amigas/monitors)	£24.95
GG2+ board - use PC cards in big-box Amigas	£129.95
ChipUp 1 to 2MB Chip RAMupgrade for A500/A1500/A2000's	£99.95
A2000 keyboards (new) for A2000/3000/4000* (*adapter +£5)	£49.95
50MHz capable PGA FPU for SX32Pro-50 or accelerators	£59.95
Videomaster PCMCIA concurrent sound+25fps video digtiser	£69.95
A1200 Workbench 3.0 disks (5) with WB3.0 & user manuals	£19.95

Two-and-a-half new A1200 Expansion Products from Eyetech

PortPlus **- high speed serial and parallel port expansion**

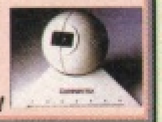


- *2 x **460Kbaud** buffered serial ports with low CPU overhead*
- *PC & Amiga compatible parallel port transferring up to **500K bytes/sec***
- *Optional high speed PC-Amiga & Amiga-Amiga **networking software***
- ***Leaves PCMCIA & trapdoor free** ; accelerator friendly & very easy to fit*

PortPlus - just £99.95!

New! *PortJnr*- 1 high speed serial port - *just £49.95*

***Quickcam* for the Amiga**



- *Use a low cost **PC Quickcam** to capture IFF images on your Amiga*
- ***Fully multitasking** - including window resizing even whilst digitising*
- *Compatible with **all Amigas** with standard Amiga printer port & WB1.3+*

Quickcam* hardware adapter and software - *only £39.95!

Apollo Accelerators - Unbeatable pricing

Entry level A1200 Accelerators - Unbelievable value

25MHz '030 with MMU & FPU. (5 Mips)	*- Just £79.95*
33MHz '030 with MMU & FPU. (7 Mips)	*- Just £89.95*
Power User A1200 '040/'060 accelerators (no tower req'd)	
25MHz '040 with MMU & FPU. (19 Mips)	*- Only £189.95*
33MHz '040 with MMU & FPU. (25 Mips)	*- Only £229.95*
40MHz '040 with MMU & FPU. (30 Mips)	*- Only £249.95*
50MHz '060 with MMU & FPU. (40 Mips)	*- Only £394.95*

A Standard A1200 is rated at 1.3 Mips. All measurements from Sysinfo

>>Special memory pricing with accelerator purchases<<

4MB - £19.95; 8MB - £39.95; 16MB - £69.95; 32MB - £149.95* (60/70*ns)

This Months Sale Specials

Data/fax modems with psu	
- V32 14.4Kbps data, 9.6/14.4 fax	£29.95
- V34 28.8Kbps data, 14.4 fax	£69.95
- V34+ 36.6Kbps data, 14.4 fax	£89.95
ISDN adapter - ZorroII for big-box	£159.95
20- pin Zip RAM 4x1Mbit chips 60ns for A3000, Octogon, '386 board etc	£9.95
A1200 RAM boards (clock, FPU skt)	£34.95
SCSI ext Zip drives w/PSU (no cart)	£129.95
Slim external floppy drives	£34.95
Stereo speakers (pair), amp & psu	£14.95
Metal CDROM case (no psu)	£5.95
Amiga microswitched mouse	£9.95
Amiga CDROM disks - our sel'n - 4 for	£10.00

Cocktel - from ProDAD

At Last - Professional Colour and Sound Videoconferencing - for all '030+ Amigas with HD & 6MB

- *Works with most Amiga sound & video digitisers (ProGrab, Vlab, Technosound etc)*
- *Works with 28.8 modems, ISDN etc*
- *Simultaneous text, video, audio & file tranfer*
- ***Ring/write for further details***

Full Cocktel software - £99.95
High quality colour conferencing camera - only £159.95

Eyetech Group Ltd
The Old Bank, 12 West Green, Stokesley, N Yorks, TS9 5BB, UK

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01642 713 185
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eyetech@cix.compulink.co.uk
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Voted AUI Amiga Company of the Year 1996/7

EYETECH

Next Day delivery to EC and USA/Canada. Worldwide deliveries in 2-7 days from receipt of faxed order and payment details. (eg SX32 next day to NYC £25.30)

UK m'land 2/next day insured del'y charges: S/w, cables, buffered i/f £2.50/£3; 2.5" drives, accelerators, mem boards £6/£7; 3.5" drives, modems, psu's £8/£10; CDPlus £10/£12

Ring/fax/email for other delivery costs

UK bank/building society cheques, Visa*, Mastercard*, Switch, Delta, Connect, Postal/Money orders accepted. * A 3% surcharge is applicable to all credit card orders.

Due to space limitations some of the specs given are indictive only - please ring/write for further details. Please check prices, specs and availability before ordering. If ordering by post please include a contact phone no. Goods are not supplied on a trial basis. E&OE. All prices include VAT at 17.5%. VAT is not applicable to non-EC orders



00:08:23



Gateway shake PC World

Gateway 2000 have sent shock waves through the PC community by thumbing their nose at Intel, Microsoft and Compaq, all in the space of a week. On the 14th of May, Gateway pulled out of a merger valued at $7 billion with the world's biggest PC manufacturer Compaq. Gateway CEO Ted Waitt stressed differences in business practices between the two companies, stating that the Gateway vision was not compatible with Compaq's. Ted Waitt, who is a majority shareholder in the company, is also reported to be unwilling to accept any deal which did not give him equal footing.



In a move being viewed as either supreme confidence or supreme hubris, Ted Waitt followed this up with a scathing attack on the Microsoft / Intel duopoly. This move is viewed by the industry as being quite extraordinary in the light of Gateway's reputation as a major proponent of the Microsoft vision and their close relationship with Intel.

Ted Waitt implied that he did not consider the current 'WIntel' duopoly to be healthy for the industry or good for the customer.

During his speech at the PC Tech Forum in Burlington, California, he stated his belief that an OS should be a much simpler system, a "...front end, a navigational tool" that allowed users to get on with their work rather than tied them up in OS specifics. He went on to suggest that users on average spend 27% of their time tweaking Windows95. Waitt outlined the vision of more accessible, functional and affordable computers, factors he believes are often lost in the rush for innovation. In the light of Gateway's positive noises about the Amiga OS, specifically praising its efficiency and friendliness, and their statement that the Amiga buy-out will "...strengthen our intellectual property position..." it is hard to see what more that Gateway could do to persuade Amiga owners that they share a philosophy with the Amiga.

In other news, Gateway strengthened their economic position with the announcement of a move to the New York stock exchange and a 3 for 1 stock split. The news sparked a jump in share value from $61.377 to $68.875 during heavy trading, 6 million shares changing hands.

16Gb CD-ROM

Sony have announced the development of high capacity technology for optical discs. The system is based on the development of a high power blue-green laser, a holy grail of CD development for years. The system is described as a significant advance on the DVD standard which stores 2.6Gb.

DVD is already on sale in Japan as a music and video carrying medium. DVD drives will start becoming available as a computer storage medium towards the end of the year. Sony view the new disc technology as replacing DVDs for video recording, while the smaller DVD should provide more than sufficient storage for any computer use in the immediate future.

The new style discs will be about the size of today's CD, but will be able to carry an entire motion picture in high definition video format, much higher resolution than DVD can manage.



Advertisers Index:

Epic sign Alien F1

Epic Marketing are to publish Paolo Cattani's technically excellent racing game Alien F1. Epic have told us that they have supplied the author with the track information he needed to implement realistic race tournaments, and have encouraged him to produce an arcade mode to balance the "realistic" (read very very hard) mode. Alien F1 has garnered interest from all corners since Paolo Cattani sent the demo in as a readers' submission to CU Amiga, appearing on the cover disks of two other magazines since. We will do a full preview of this impressive title as soon as we can get an update.



News in brief

A1200s on sale!

Wizard Developments were selling new Amiga magic packs at the World of Amiga show. These were some of the first new Amigas to be sold to the public since the collapse of Escom. Amiga International are planning on getting their remaining stocks of A1200s into retail outlets as soon as possible. For the full story of the WOA show, check out the full report starting on page 12. Wizard can be reached on 01322 527800

Buddha Meets Catweasel

Jens Shonfeld of Individual Computers and Oliver Kastl of Elaborate Bytes have teamed up to produce the impressive Catweasel plus Buddha card for Zorro II systems. The card has all the functionality of the Catweasel reviewed last month and 3 buffered IDE interfaces. The software package includes CacheCDFS and claims to handle all CD drives, hard disks, CD changers and removable media including IDE Zip drives.

Micronik Super Amiga!

Micronik are releasing the infinitiv 1500 Z3 tower for the A1200. This comes with the new Z3 board which has fully A4000 compatible Zorro 3 slots and video slot. Most impressive is an A4000 CPU slot, which in this case will be populated with a PowerPC board.

Siamese Video

HiQ have announced availabity of a demo video of the Siamese 2.0 system including RTG. The £5.00 video includes a £20.00 discount voucher, so paying for itself if the viewer decides to purchase the Siamese system. Phone HiQ on 01525 2113267 for further details. http://www.siamese.co.uk



Stateside News

by Jason Compton: Jason Compton is Editor in Chief of Amiga Report Magazine

CD-ROM Filesystem and Mastering Update

AsimWare, the premier commercial supplier of CD-ROM tools for the Amiga, has released maintenance upgrades for their AsimCDFS and MasterISO software packages.

AsimCDFS 3.8 expands support to new CD-ROM drives and expands international language support. MasterISO 1.25b adds the popular Philips CDD2600 CD-writer drive to its list of compatible drives for creating your own CD-ROMs.

AsimWare makes all of its minor and maintenance upgrades available to registered users online at ftp.asimware.com, www.asimware.com, or through their BBS at +905-332-9207.

Amiga Developer Network Goes Online

One of the products of a resurging sense of unity between Amiga developers sparked at the Amiga '97 show in St. Louis is the Amiga Developer Network, maintained by North Alabama Society of Amiga Users webmaster Wayne Hunt. The ADN is now online at www.amiga.org/developer and is intended to be a central resource for Amiga software and hardware developers to share discussion, contact information, and new specification initiatives which have grown out of the initial meeting.

A European follow-up to the meeting was arranged for the May WOA UK show to be chaired by Nova Design's Kermit Woodall. Watch CU Amiga and the ADN for the outcome of that event.

World-Wide Amiga's
Amiga Developer Network

Pangolin Releases Free Laser Control Software

The Amiga has always been good for "show control" – being used as the brains behind complicated light and sound effects machinery. Even to this day, Disney still uses Amigas in its theme parks. One of the pioneers in Amiga show control, Pangolin, has ceased its development for the Amiga but has also released its Amiga laser show control software for free.

Technical support is, of course, limited for LSD1000, but if you're in the field it's cetainly worth a look. You can download the software from www.pangolin.com/download.html.

GVP Rescue Open for Business

GVP Rescue, founded by a former GVP engineer, is dedicated to just that – looking after your GVP products and offering repair services on the complete product line. It also has some new and refurbished GVP products at good prices. GVP Rescue will also repair A1200s and A4000s. Contact GVP Rescue at 910-790-3465 or 73143.231@compuserve.com for information.

Pretium 1.1 Released

IDD have just released the latest version of its Pretium personal checkbook and finances package. It's a fully integrated system, allowing you to print checks directly from your computer, graph money flow, and exchange files with Quicken and Microsoft Money on other platforms.

Version 1.1 adds expanded flexibility for tracking payments and payees, transaction sorting and the check printing and voiding options. It's also designed to work with any form of currency and is not hard-coded to dollars or pounds.

Pretium 1.1 is US$54.95 and requires OS 2.x. Pretium is available from dealers or directly from IDD, 204 NW 25th Street, Gainsville FL 32607. A demo of Pretium is available on Aminet. IDD can also be contacted online at www.pobox.com/~idd.

PRETIUM

ClickBOOM Announces Game Wish List

Continuing its role as the front-runner to bring popular PC game titles to the Amiga, ClickBOOM has launched a "game wish list", allowing Amiga users to vote for titles that they would be interested in buying, were an Amiga port available. This market research may influence ClickBOOM's future projects, although no specific plans have been announced other than theupcoming release of Myst for the Amiga.

So far, over 1500 Amiga users have had their voices heard and as of this writing, the list is less than two weeks old. ClickBOOM allows up to three votes on any game you choose. You can reach ClickBOOM's page at: home.ican.net/~clkboom, or mail them a list of three games at PXL Computers, Box 969, 31 Adelaide St. East, M5C 2k3 Toronto,Canada.

CLICK BOOM

Legacy To Include Deathbed

New Amiga videotape magazine Legacy, will include the serialised video, Dave Haynie's The Deathbed Vigil, a video of the last days in the Commodore offices, in three 1997 issues, and will include hitherto unseen footage.

Legacy (the first issue will be released in June), will include over an hour of Amiga news, reviews, and information in each issue on VHS. Plans for European distribution have not yet been completed.

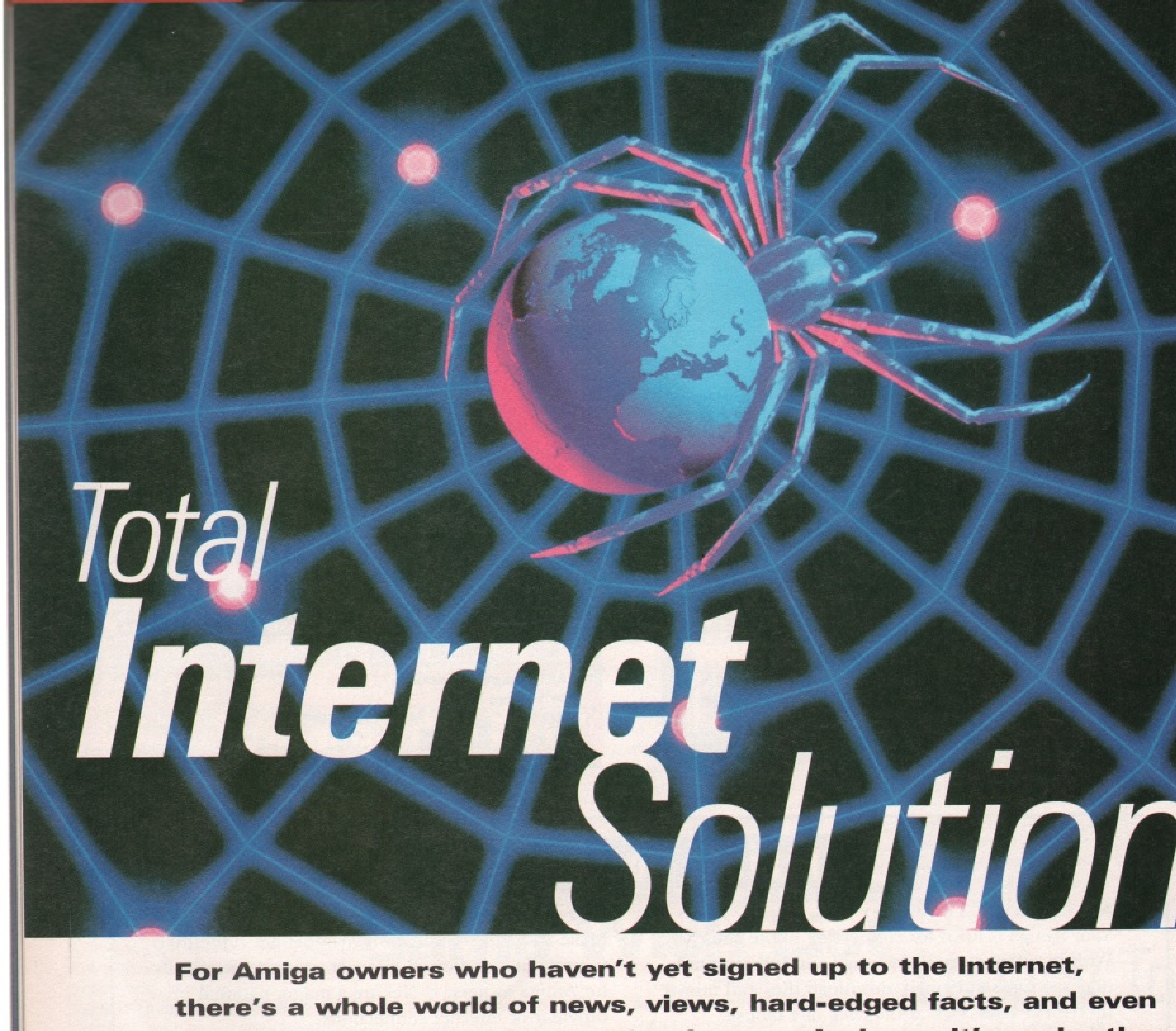
US subscriptions are being taken. Contact Legacy at 773-465-5158 voice, or www.xnet.com/~jcompton/legacy.html for more information.

Legacy

GamaSoft Announces Dealer Alliance

GamaSoft, a growing Michigan-based Amiga distributor, has just announced plans to launch a "Dealer-Direct Network" to offer special promotional incentives to participating dealers for software titles GamaSoft distributes.

Presently, GamaSoft handles North American sales of LH Publishing's DrawStudio, and is the exclusive North American distributor of the Finale Development line of products. GamaSoft's contact, Ted Wallingford, can be reached at: twalling@pantheon.macomb.mi.us, or you can telephone the company on, 00 1 313-365-8414.



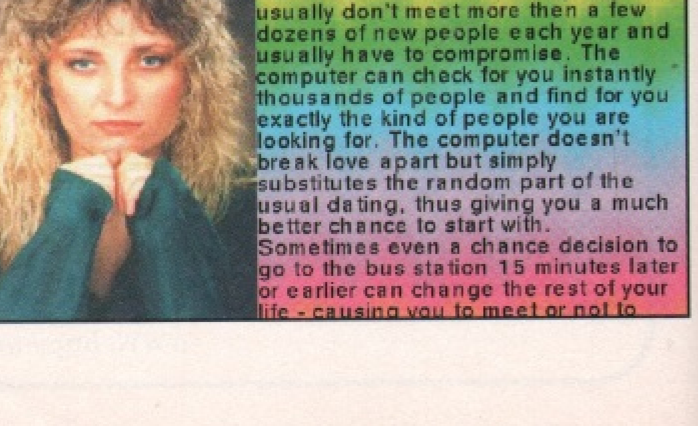
Total Internet Solution

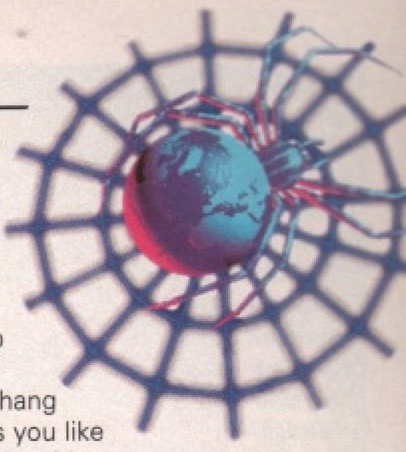
For Amiga owners who haven't yet signed up to the Internet, there's a whole world of news, views, hard-edged facts, and even the dreaded infotainment waiting for you. And now it's easier than ever to get connected, thanks to CU Amiga's special offers.

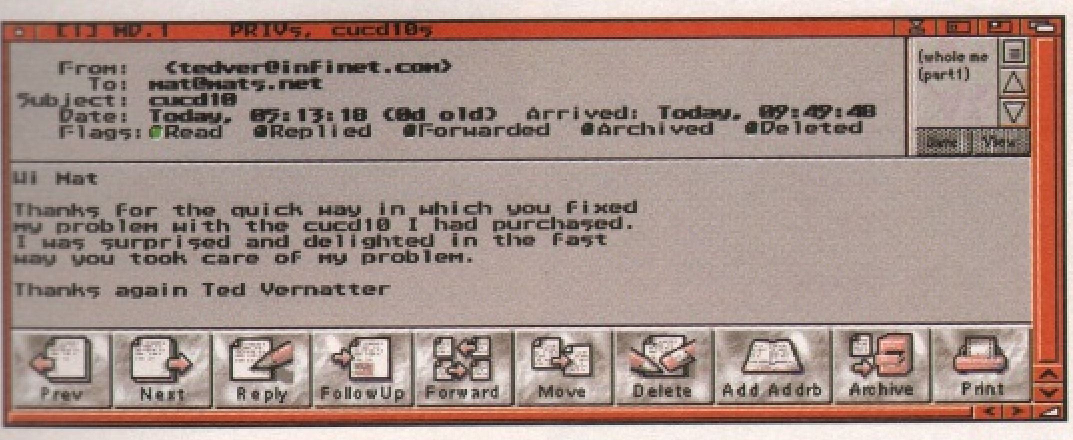
Everyone may have heard of the Internet but, frankly, the Amiga users who are on the Net are far outnumbered by those who aren't. And after analysing our reader surveys and talking to countless readers directly, we think we understand why. In the past, Amiga Net software was complex, explanations were technical, and it was never very clear exactly what the point was in the first place. There was also a problem with cost. We hope to make things easier this time, with the definitive explanation and a cheap, dead-easy method of getting your Amiga online. Read on for more.

Before examining what we can do with it, let's explain in basic terms what the Internet is. Going on the Internet means connecting our Amigas to a world wide network of computers. The important words in that sentence are "world wide" and "network". The Internet spreads to each and every country in the world – but don't worry, you should only pay at local rates. The network aspect means that any computer on the Internet can send and receive information of any kind to any other computer on the Net. The speed may vary, but, from your point of view, there really is no difference in communicating with someone on your street to someone sitting in a shed in the middle of a blizzard in the Antarctic.

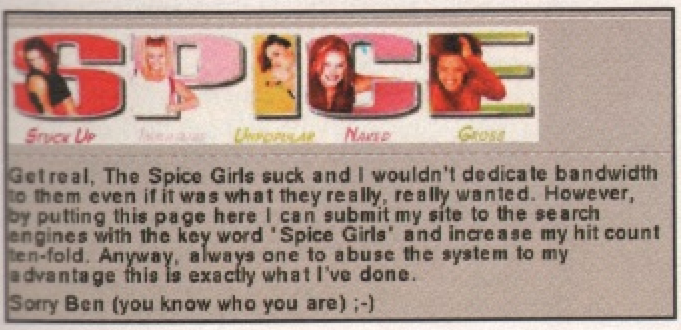
"Someone" because the vast bulk of computers on the Internet at any one time are personal computers, just like your Amiga, with a single person behind the keyboard. They've all got on to the Internet in more or less the same way.







▲ **Above: E-mail is one of the most valuable aspects of being on the Net.**



Just like you, there are millions of people that use the services on the Internet. Even though they may only be connected to the Internet for a small amount of time every few days. Before we get to grips with the technicalities of the Net, it's important to comprehend its size. If we must employ an analogy, it would be that the Internet is a huge, almost instantaneous post office that spans the world. This post office places no limit to how many letters you can send or receive, or to where and to whom you may send them.

In fact, the post office breaks everything up into tiny little letters with the correct addresses written on them. Thousands of letters are dispatched every second, and the "post office" reads the addresses to deliver the letters to the right letter boxes. But there's much more to be done than just mailing stuff – there's an entire world of information, services and communication that the Internet has to offer.

Hopefully the analogy has illustrated what an amazing thing the Internet is, now it's time to delve in a little further.



E-mail

E-mail is probably the best-known application of the Internet. In fact, the number one bonus of getting netted is that you get an E-mail address. From then on, you can write letters to millions of people in every country; it costs virtually nothing, and your letters arrive in a matter of minutes, rather than days. Perhaps you don't know anyone with an E-mail address? Lots of public services have them. You can write to television stations, newspapers, magazines (like CU Amiga), the Met Office, the police, your local MP ... even the Pope has an E-mail address!

Closer to home, there are thousands of Amiga users with E-mail addresses. If you don't know anyone locally who can help out with your Amiga problems, or just talk about the Amiga, then there is no better way to find someone than via E-mail.

E-mail is even cheaper to use when you consider that it's not necessary to read and write E-mail. Just link up for about 30 seconds to pick up your mail. Then hang up and spend as long as you like composing replies. Another 30 seconds or so on is all it takes to send out a whole batch of replies. Quite obviously, this is more cost effective than actually using the voice telephone!

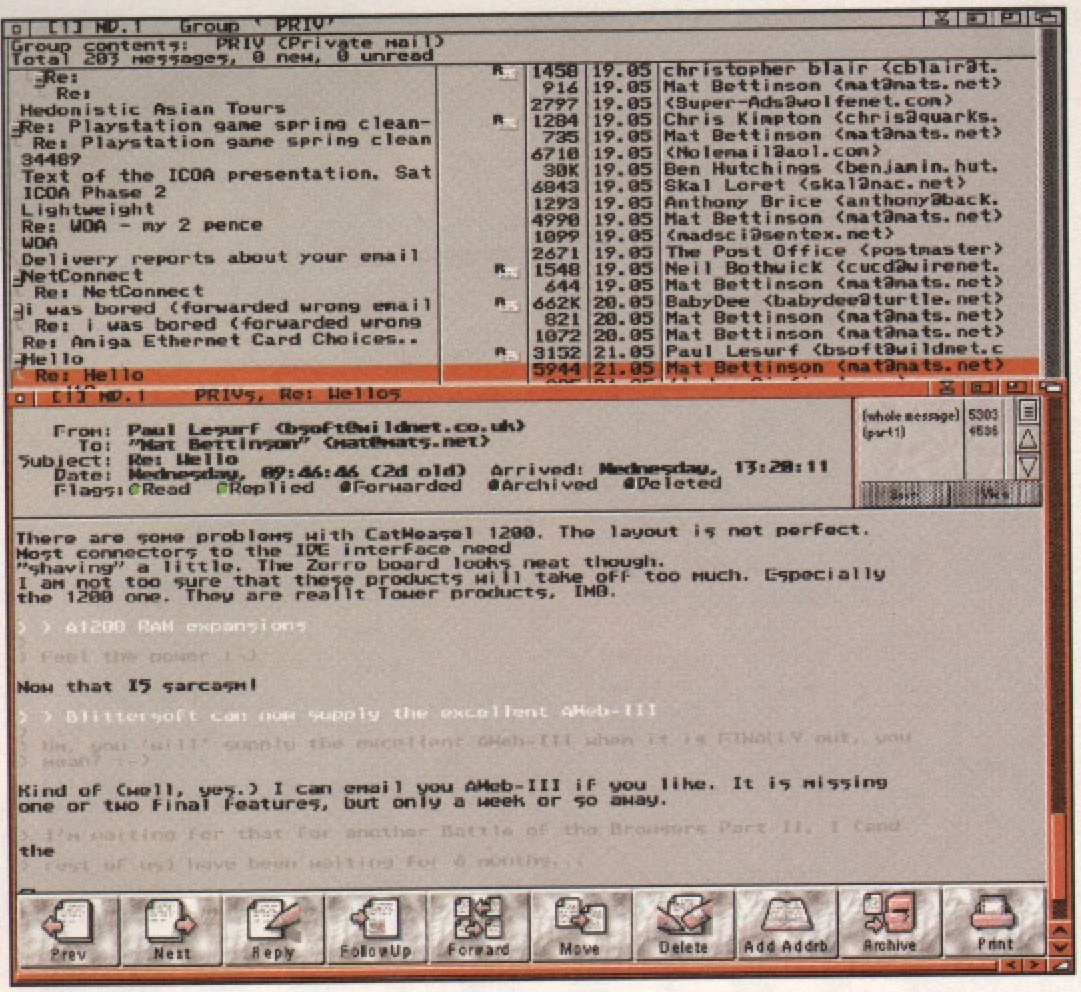
World Wide Web

The World Wide Web (or WWW for short) has to be seen to be believed. If you have access to CD-ROM then it's likely you will have had a taster of what it's like, with the WWW pages we put on every cover CD. The basic concept of the WWW isn't hard to explain, but the sheer size of it makes a CD-ROM look like a pimple on a fly's bottom. By using an Amiga Web browser, we can type in an address and, shortly after, view a document – one that can be laden with pictures, tables, sounds, information entry forms, search facilities, and a very great deal more.

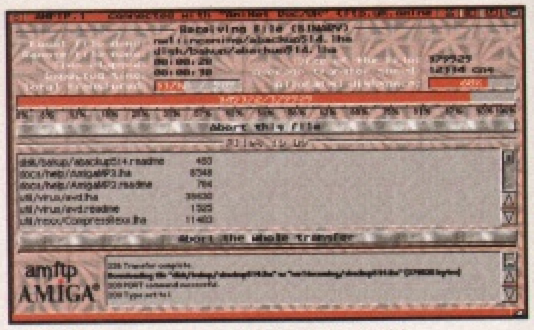
Any document on the Web can have "links" or "jumps" to related pages or documents – despite the fact they may be in a completely different computer or in a completely different country. In all honesty, you can find *anything* you want on the WWW. If you're interested in it, simply go to a Web search page and look for it. And you'll find lots and lots and lots of institutions officially dealing with whatever it is you are interested in, not to mention individuals personally interested in your topic. You'll find information, specifications, home shopping, hints, jokes, and debate. All it needs is a click and you're there.







Here's a ▶ picture of an incoming E-mail folder in MicroDot II. The little 'R' symbols represent E-mails that have been replied to.



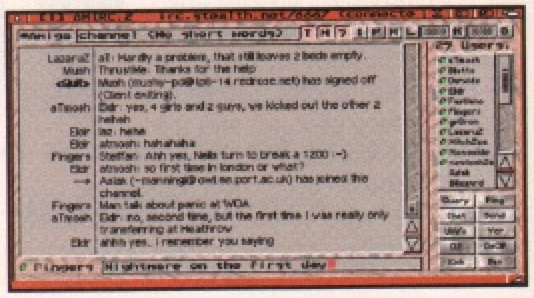
▲ FTP gives us access to the Aminet with its gigabytes of Amiga programs.

tainment value, or to instantly meet a group of like-minded people. The ever-busy Amiga channel usually has 10-30 people, and someone there probably has an answer to that question that's been nagging you.

IRC isn't for everyone though – it's easy to lose track of time and run up a considerable phone bill if you use it enough. Many people who use IRC limit their visits to the weekend special rates, and budget for how much time they may spend chatting on it. As with all Internet activities, you can use IRC at the same time as using any of the other aspects of the Net.

File Transfer Protocol

You can send files via the WWW but it's not ideally suited to it. Why do we want to get files? Well, wouldn't you like to lay your hands on any item of freely distributable software for your Amiga? There's the Aminet of course – you've heard us talk about it. Then there are regular commercial CDs containing the recent additions to the Aminet. Imagine being able to search an entire several Gigabyte archive and download any of the hundreds of thousands of items of software after reading in-depth descriptions of the packages written by the authors?



▲ Internet Relay Chat (IRC) let's us talk to many other people at the same time, in real time.

Signing up with Wirenet

This is your chance to get hooked up to the Internet and save money. For this special offer, we have chosen Wirenet, an Amiga-specific provider with software and know-how tailored for Amiga owners. In fact, Wirenet are the only Amiga-specific Internet Service Provider that we know of in the UK – and their service is provided by U-net, the Warrington-based Internet outfit with the distinctive u-net.com tag on the end of their E-mail addresses.

Here's the deal. Normally, Internet providers charge for connecting and then around £10 a month in additional fees. Wirenet have waived the joining fee for CU Amiga readers – £30 gets you three months service up front. If, at the end of that time, you wish to discontinue the service, you may do so without any further obligation. For details of how to connect to Wirenet, please see page 9 of this issue. The NetConnect Lite package on the CD-ROM is specifically tailored to work with Wirenet.

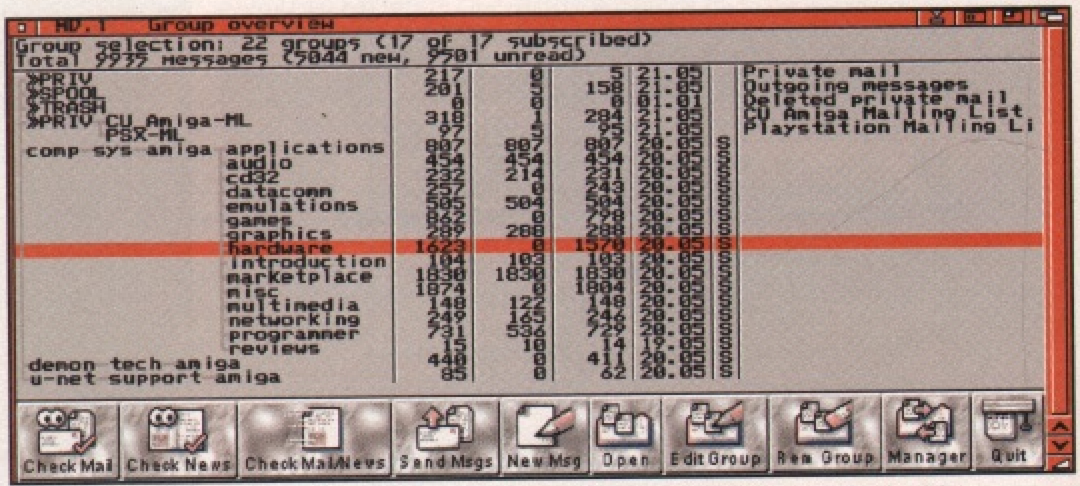


There has never been any thing like the WWW, and arguably it's the greatest advance the human race has seen for a very long time. You can be part of this and make your own web pages – then millions of people all around the world can visit them. This is no idle exaggeration, it's absolutely true, and it's there for the taking. The question isn't "Is it worth it?", it's "How can I not be a part of this?".

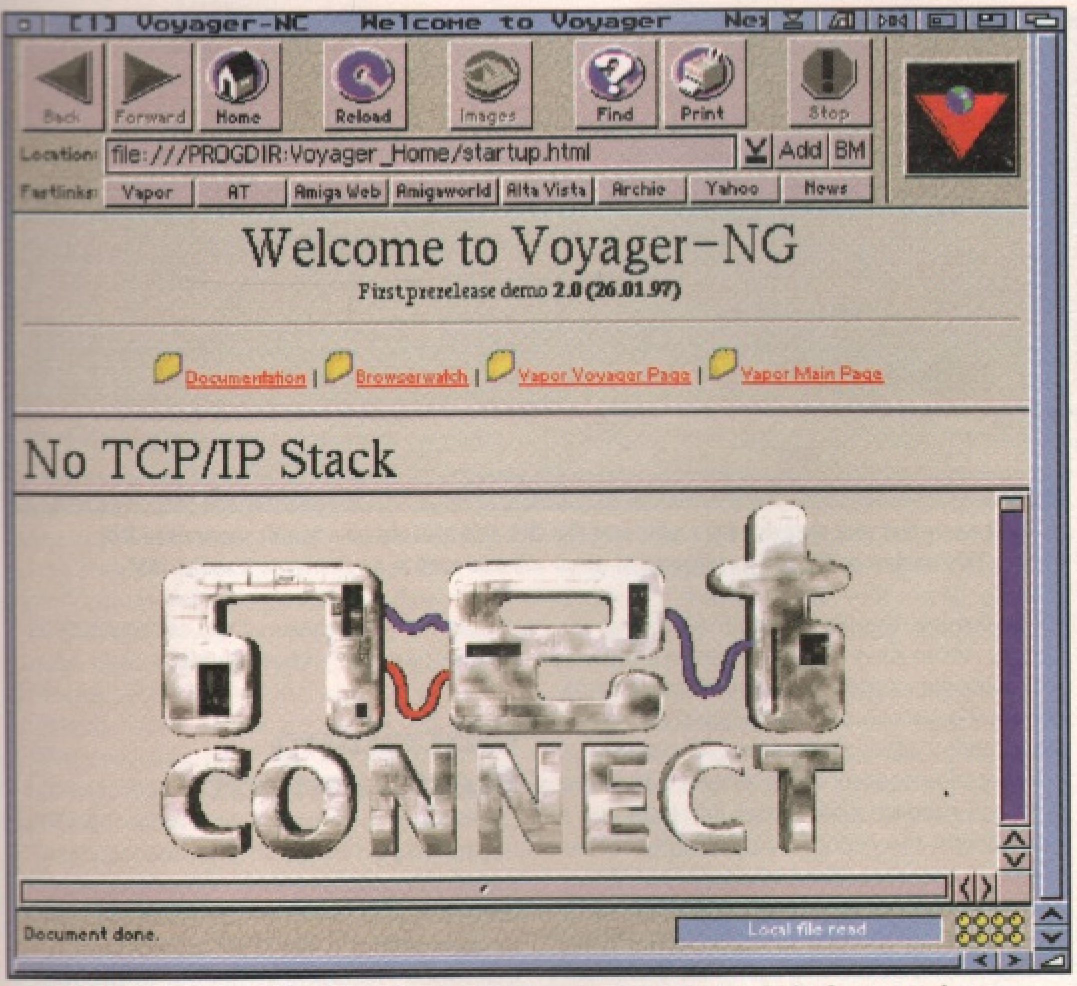
Other things to do

Internet Relay Chat

A more costly but distinctively rewarding activity is Internet Relay Chat. When linked up, it's possible to chat to someone here and now or in "real time" as it's technically known. It's not limited to one person, in fact it's normally used by many people on a single channel. You can talk publicly, so everyone else can see what you have to say, or privately, so they don't. It's a fantastic mechanism useful for sheer enter-



▲ Newsgroups are wonderous things. Here are Amiga specific ones containing thousands of articles.



▲ Seen here is Voyager-NG. The bottom frame contains the documentation for the NetConnect package. Right-mouse-click over this and select View Frame Full Window for in an in-depth guide to the software.

Downloading is actually really easy with a File Transfer Protocol program, or FTP for short. Even if something goes wrong when downloading the file, it's possible to resume the transfer later on. Forget about buying disks from PD houses or trying to get software off your friends, if it's Amiga it's freely distributable on the Aminet, even if just in demo form. It's an incredible resource that clearly sets the Amiga apart from other platforms. The Aminet is the world's largest archive of freely distributable software on *any* platform and it's all Amiga. Says something, doesn't it?.

Usenet News

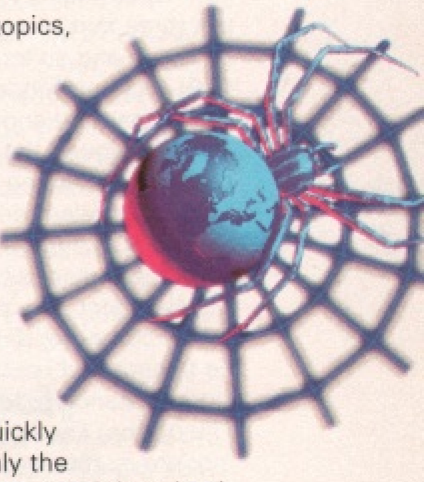
This is a kind of cross between IRC and E-mail. People write messages into a 'newsgroup'. Anyone else can scan a newsgroup, read its messages and post follow-ups. There are thousands of people reading popular groups with hundreds of postings. So things don't get lost, newsgroups use an intelligent threading method, so that messages of the same topic appear grouped together. It's only necessary to scan the topics, and enter those that interest you.

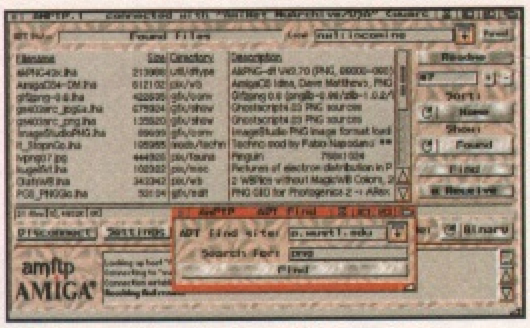
Messages can be posted to several groups, or to just one. There's no need to manually post to each – news clients will allow you to send a message to several groups. News can be read/written online or offline. It can still be quickly read online because only the subjects of the messages need downloading, the full articles are only downloaded when you choose to read them.

All of the postings of particular groups can be entirely downloaded – so that it's possible to go offline, read them at your leisure, and reply at length without worrying about the cost of phone bills. Again, going online is only needed to post replies. The Amiga is extremely well represented in Usenet. The groups inside comp.sys.amiga include audio, datacomm, graphics, hardware, misc, marketplace, programmers and so on. The full name of misc would be comp.sys.amiga.misc but Amiga users often abbreviate this to csa.misc. As a forum, comp.sys.amiga.hardware is probably the best area for help on Amiga hardware-related issues that you can find. It's filled



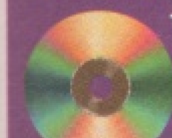
▲ Once a month is not enough of CU Amiga? Well, our web site is updated every few days with the latest up-to-the-minute news.





▲ The search function in AmFTP is invaluable for searching the Aminet.

The NetConnect Software

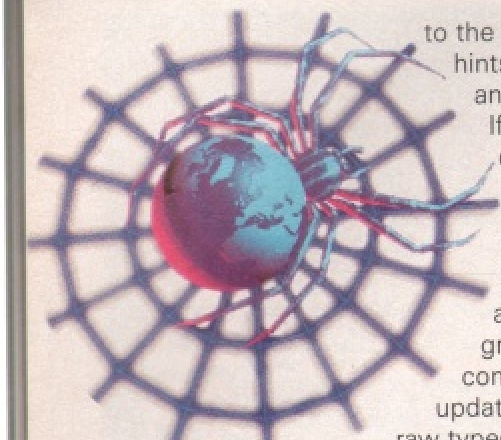


The NetConnect software provided on the cover CD-ROM this month is a special exclusive CU Amiga 'Lite' version. Please note that this free version does have a couple of limitations:

- **Each session using NetConnect Lite is limited to one hour's usage.**
- **Your version of NetConnect Lite will expire after 100 days.**

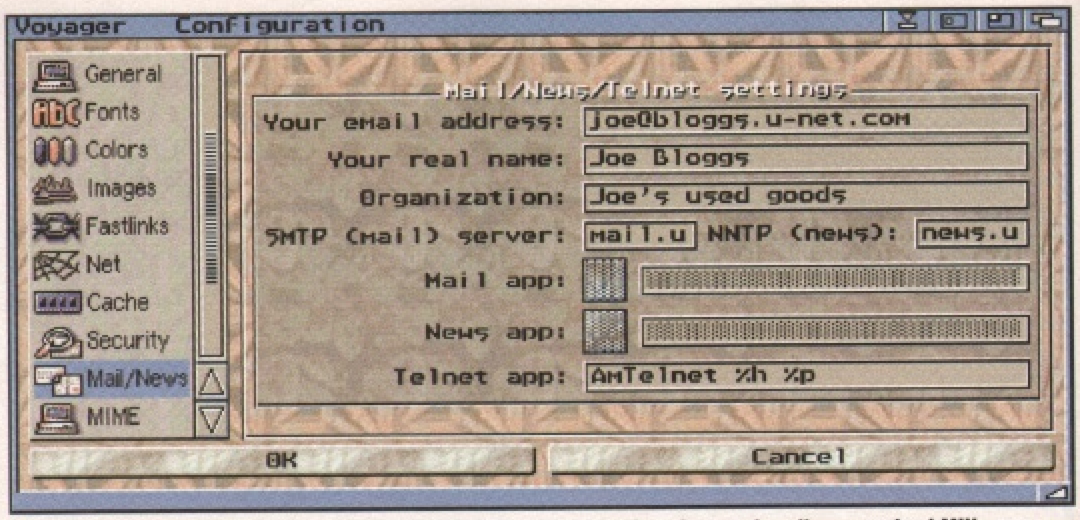
On offer to CU Amiga readers, the full version of Active Software's NetConnect Lite costs £44.95 (normal price is £59.95). But you don't have to upgrade. You could consider using other software such as Miami (which also has a one hour limit but costs £20 to register), or the shareware versions of the E-mail, FTP and WWW clients. Miami is easy to run – even the unregistered version will run one hour sessions forever (it will redial after hanging up). So there are other options available...

While the NetConnect package is not cheap, it is a complete Internet package containing full versions of the very best in Amiga Internet software. The package you choose may depend on your budget and how much you plan to use your new Internet connection. We'll explain matters in greater detail on the CU NetConnect E-mail mailing list, which you will start receiving as soon as you sign up with Wirenet. Floppy disk users, please see page 9.



to the brim with experts and hints on hardware. Again, an invaluable resource.

If you can't find a specific newsgroup full of the people talking about a topic close to your heart, something is wrong. There's around 20,000 newsgroups at last count, containing several daily-updated gigabytes of raw typed-in text from participants in groups from alt.comedy.british.blackadder to york.psychology.course with alt.tv.babylon-5 and alt.fan.tonya-harding.whack.whack.whack somewhere in-between.



▲ **Don't worry that your windows don't quite look like this, this shot shows a heavily customised MUI system. This window is Voyager's configuration which will also need to be altered so it works 100%.**

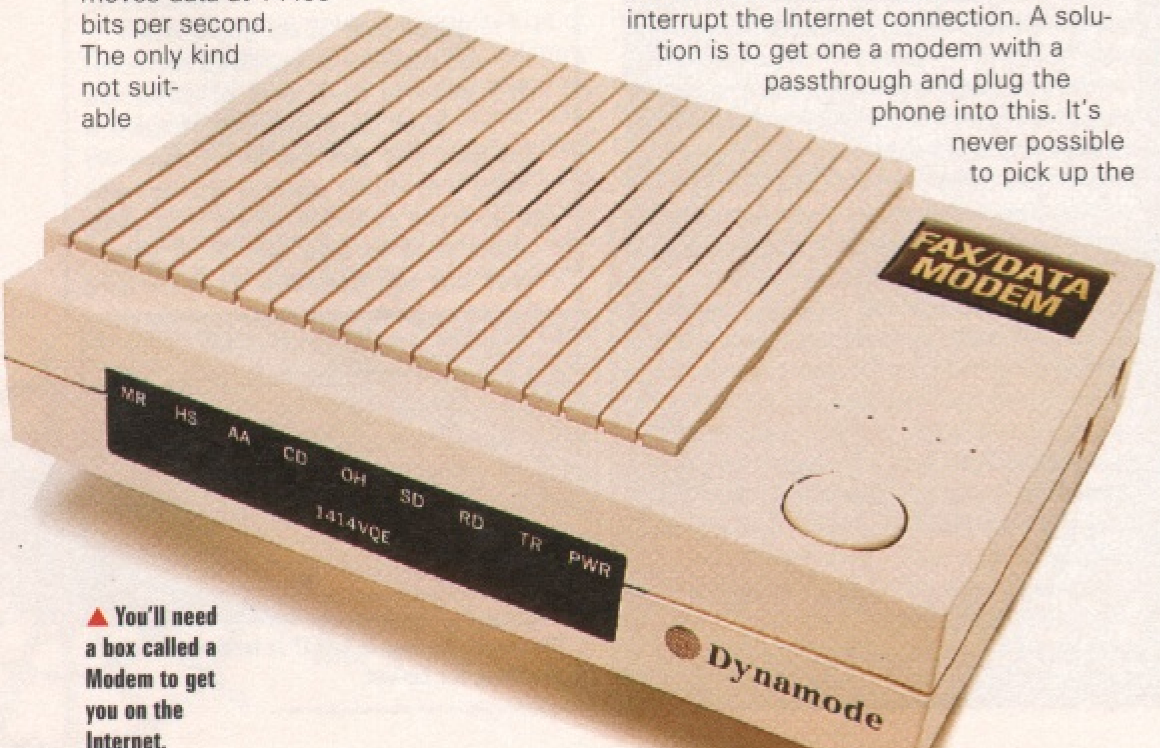
Modems

Now you know what's in the Internet for you, what does it take to get on? Simply put three things together: a modem, some software and an Internet Service Provider (ISP) account. Modems are actually the simple part. By and large, they're all the same, although they do have varying speeds, depending on the cost, and a branded modem does tend to be more reliable to a degree, as you would expect.

Modem stands for Modulator DEModulator and, put simply, it converts binary computer data to sound, which can be transmitted backwards and forwards along a standard domestic telephone line. The bottom line is that the faster the modem is, the more data it can move over a telephone line in a given time, meaning you need to be on the phone for a shorter time to send/receive a given amount of data. Faster modems are cheaper in the longer term, so cutting back on expenditure in this area is largely a false economy.

The only kinds of modem we should consider are 14K4, 28K8 and 33K6 modems. The higher those numbers, the faster a modem is, for example, a 14K4 moves data at 14400 bits per second. The only kind not suitable for an Amiga, thankfully, are the internal variety which plug into PC internal slots. Any external modem is guaranteed to work unless it's known as a "Windows modem" specifically, rather than a simple windows compatible modem. A serial lead will come with any modem and, again, will plug directly into the rear of every Amiga, bar a CD32. In the past, there were various ins and outs of getting a modem to work. Nowadays, things are much simpler and there's hardly a modem available that doesn't have a suitable configuration. If you want to be absolutely sure that no problems occur, you might like to consider picking up a modem from Active Software who guarantee it will work with their NetConnect software. Their prices on 28K8 and 33K6 modems are highly reasonable.

Given the modem is powered by the AC/DC plug-pack that's plugged into the Amiga via the provided serial port, all that's needed then is to plug the machine into a phone socket. Also provided will be a lead from the back of the modem which will plug into the phone socket. You may want to buy a double adapter so that a phone is plugged in at the same time. But you will need to ensure that you don't go picking up phone calls at the same time as the modem is online, however, as this will interrupt the Internet connection. A solution is to get one a modem with a passthrough and plug the phone into this. It's never possible to pick up the phone on the modem then as it switches off the handset when online.



▲ **You'll need a box called a Modem to get you on the Internet.**

Obtaining NetConnect

Depending on whether you have the CD or floppy edition of CU Amiga, the way to install the provided Internet software differs. If you have the CD-ROM, all that's needed is to run the NetConnect installer inside the NetConnect drawer in the root of CUCD12. Skip to the section on installing NetConnect. Readers of the floppy disk edition will need to obtain the CU Amiga 'Lite' version of NetConnect software from Active Software. Highly compressed, it still needs five floppy disks, but Active Software will send the package at a cost of only £1.50 including postage and packaging. See their advertisement on page 108 or call Active Software on 01325-352260. There is another option and that is to use a modem terminal package to download the CU NetConnect Lite software from a Bulletin Board System (BBS). These are Amigas, not on the Internet but connected to a modem permanently so you may dial in and use their system. For details on how and where to download the software from, see the coverdisk instructions on page 9. Be warned: at 4Mb in size, it can take up to half-an-hour on the phone to download, and longer with a slower modem. How you choose to obtain the software is up to you.

Installing NetConnect

After clicking on the Install_NetConnect icon, you will be prompted for the components to install. All of the check-boxes will be checked. Leave them like that unless you already have a working MUI 3.7 or later installed, in which case uncheck this box. MUI is a system for drawing program GUIs and most of the components in the NetConnect package utilise it.

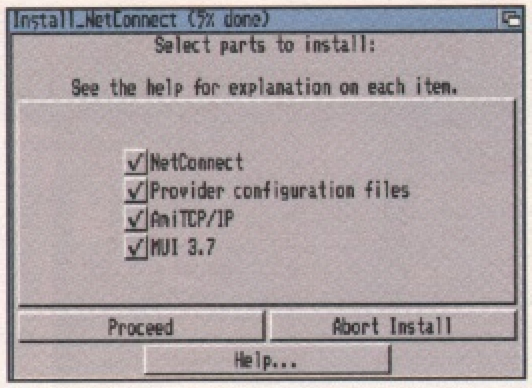
Next, you be asked where to install the NetConnect package. It will automatically create a directory called NetConnect so

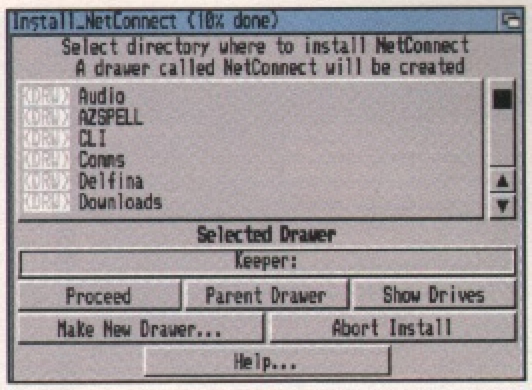
it's only necessary to choose a hard drive such as Work (it will need over 8Mb free at least). In the same manner, if MUI is checked, the installer will also ask where to put it. Again, any drive that has enough space is adequate.

After much copying from either the CD or from the temporary directory (if the archive is obtained from elsewhere), the installer will finish by running the AmiTCP preferences program. If this doesn't appear, or you see a message about MUI not being available, repeat having checked the MUI box. At some point the installer will ask if you'd like the start bar to be activated from WBStartup. We recommend you say "yes". If you like, you can always drag the NetConnect icon out of the Workbench WBStartup drawer later.

Thankfully, you've only a few simple tasks before you can get cracking on the Internet. First, select the user page by clicking "user" in the left bar of the prefs. Assuming that you have obtained the account with Wirenet, you will have already negotiated a so-called hostname. You can choose this yourself, although Wirenet may ask you to change it if it conflicts with any others. Put this hostname into the box marked Login Name.

If we were Joe Bloggs and we've organised 'bloggs' as a hostname, we'd put bloggs in this box. Next up is the password given to you by Wirenet. Keep this to yourself of course, and type it very carefully as you won't see what you are typing here. Now put your E-mail address in. If our hostname was bloggs then our address would be <user>@bloggs.u-net.com, quite a trendy-sounding





▲ **Left: the NetConnect installer first asks which components we'd like to install. Right: next, where we'd like to install it. We'll need at least 10Mb free on that drive, it's a big package!**

address... <user> can be whatever we like, Mr Bloggs would probably choose joe@bloggs.u-net.com being the great innovator that he is. All that remains is to fill in the real name box and then the organisation.

That's it! Just press Save and it's all done. You might like to try a reset now. Hopefully your Amiga will reboot with an Internet Dock start bar appearing on the Workbench. Each of the icons activates major functions. If you forget what they do, simply leave the mouse hovering over one without clicking it for a few seconds and MUI's help bubble will come to the rescue. Before we get started, let's just finish our main configuration with the Microdot II E-mail and News package included with NetConnect.

E-mail is really important – with it you can safely receive the CU Amiga NetConnect mailing list! From then on we can help you with any of your other problems. So first off, click on the E-mail icon, and Microdot II should appear. Now choose General Settings from the settings menu. The first part is easy, just make sure your real name is correct.

Now click on Network on the left. Everything should be set up more or less correctly — but you'll need to enter your password. Check on the delete mail from the server check box, making very sure your E-mail address is correct in the same way we mentioned before. If you're not sure of the setting of a box, double-check it with the screenshot at the bottom of the page, the settings should be the same apart from your specific details which are your pop3 account, password and E-mail address.

Finally, click on the left-hand signatures icon. Type your name here (and anything else you like), and this will appear at the bottom of every E-mail you write.

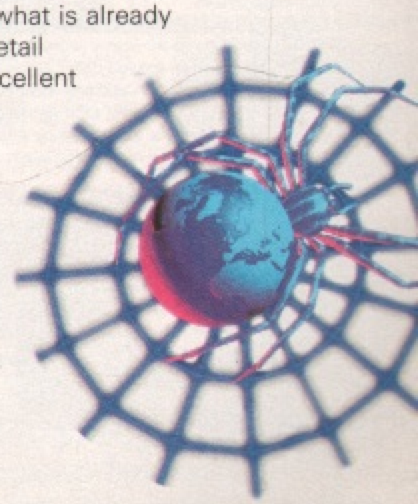
Browse freely

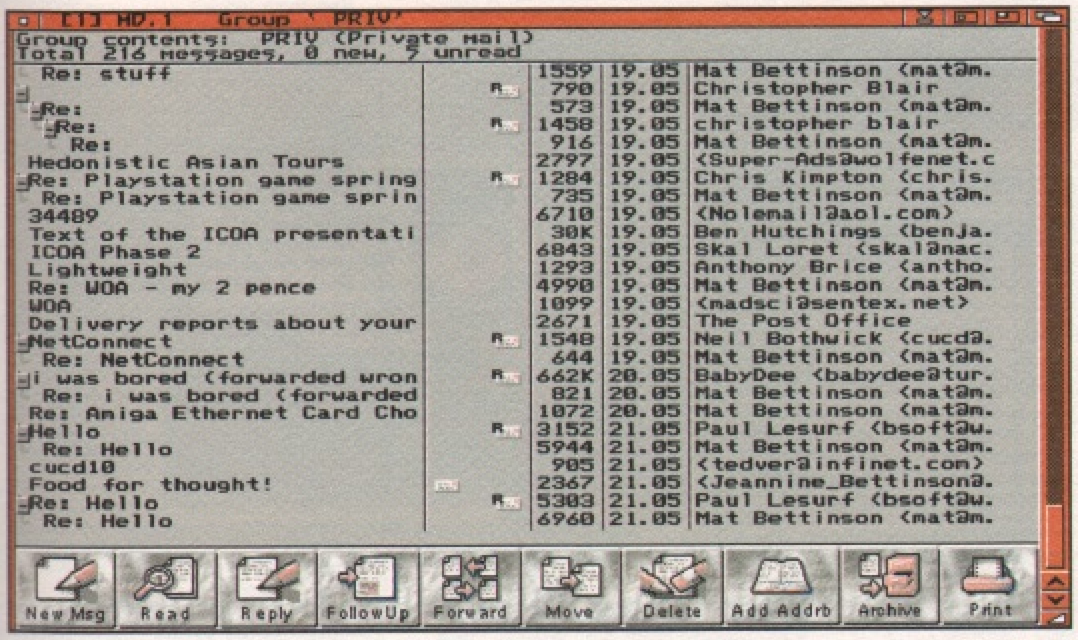
Now what would an Internet suite be if it didn't have a Web browser? NetConnect comes with the brilliant Voyager-NG browser – currently one of the two most capable browsers on the Amiga. Voyager is especially important as it has in-depth documentation on all of the elements of the NetConnect package. All you need to do to run Voyager is click on the Globe in the Internet Dock start bar.

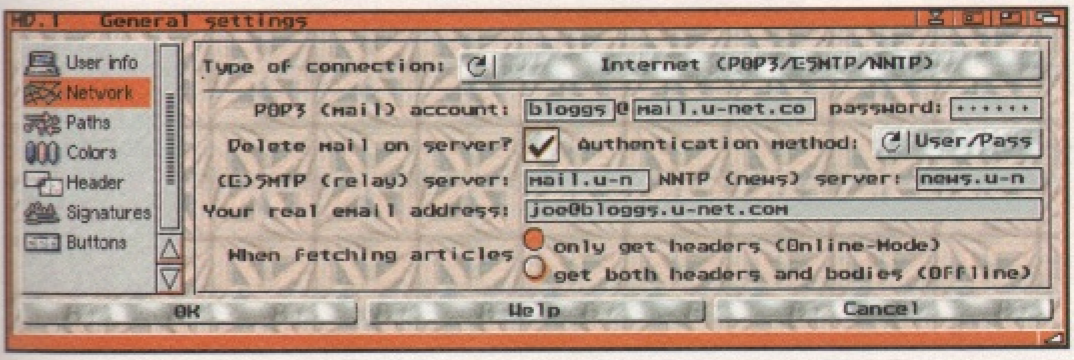
First of all, V will be split into three frames. There will be way too little of the browser to view the documentation properly. Move the mouse over the bottom documentation frame (not over the NetConnect picture) and press the right mouse button. A Frame Operations menu will pop up right under your mouse button. Move up and select View Frame Full Window. Ah, now it's much easier to read the documentation.

It's here we'll leave you as there's no point in going over what is already documented in great detail inside NetConnect's excellent Web manual, complete with pictures. We highly advice that you take time to study the various aspects of the package and hope to see you on the CU Amiga NetConnect mailing list very soon! ■

Mat Bettinson







EPIC CD-ROMS
The Best just got Better

INTO THE NET contains all the tools required to access and explore the internet with ease. The double CD set contains usable versions of MIAMI, Voyager, iBrouse, AmiTCP and more. In addition the CD's contain many utilities for creating your own WEB pages, mail, and much more. **Inc. FREE INTERNET ACCESS.**
Most items are directly usable from the CD's
Suitable for any KS2/3 Amiga.
IN-TO-THE-NET CD224 £19.99

Mick Davis's Cartoon Clipart is a new Amiga CD-ROM containing around 500 commissioned cartoon images, all of which can be used "royalty-free". Each image is stored as IFF, and all have been scanned at the highest possible resolution to ensure the best quality when printed. Supplied with a 30+ page printed index of each image. Every commissioned image on this CD is 100% original and does not/will not appear on any other CD-ROM. NEW!
MICK DAVIS' CARTOON CLIPART CD235x NEW £19.99

The new Magic Workbench CD contains the largest collection of Magic Workbench Icons, Backdrops and tools ever compiled. Includes well over 5,000 Magic WB Icons, Over 600 specially selected Magic Workbench backdrops in 8, 16 and 256 colours, over 30megabytes of Workbench tools, gadgets, patches and desktop enhancer tools/utilities. The CD also includes Magic Workbench aswell as many other items never before released on any Amiga CD ROM. If you want to update/enhance you existing Workbench 2 or 3 then this is the perfect Workbench add on CD ROM. This CD is only suitable for any Kickstart2/3 based Amiga's such as the A500+, A600, A1200, and A4000. NEW!
MAGIC WORKBENCH ENHANCER V2 CD187 £17.99

Contains around 5000 erotic hand drawn Images in the Japanese anime tradition.
This CD is of an Adult nature and should not be purchased by anyone likely to be offended by drawings depicting nudity and / or sex acts.
Includes images only suitable for persons over the age of 18.
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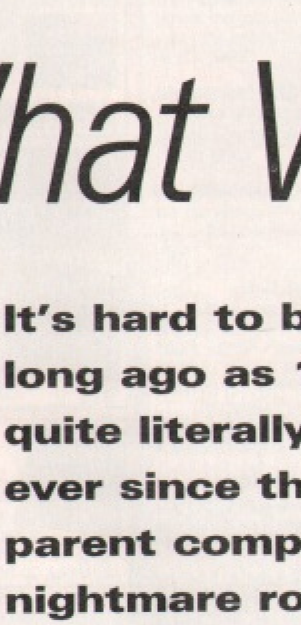
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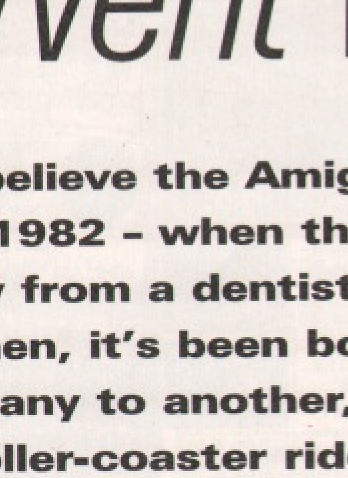
It's hard to believe the Amiga was born as long ago as 1982 – when the dream emerged quite literally from a dentist's surgery. But ever since then, it's been bounced from one parent company to another, in a crazy, nightmare roller-coaster ride, with huge ups and long, long, long downs.

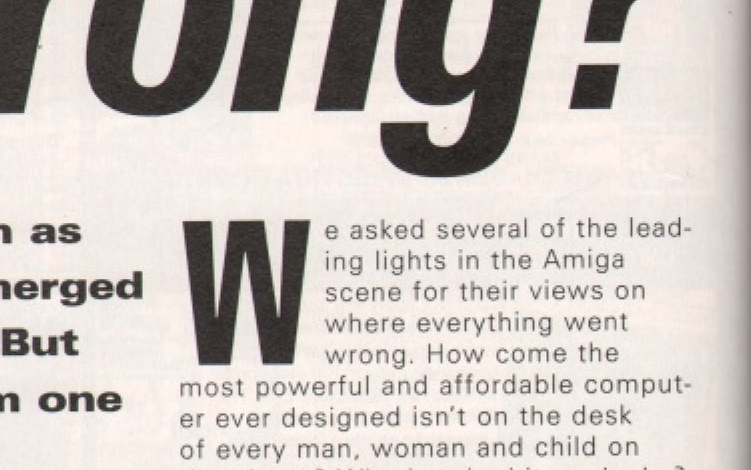
We asked several of the leading lights in the Amiga scene for their views on where everything went wrong. How come the most powerful and affordable computer ever designed isn't on the desk of every man, woman and child on the planet? Who botched it, and why? Was it down to incompetence, or was it greed? Or was it down to sheer bad luck?

1982

The year was 1982, and the Atari VCS was the Nintendo 64 of the day. Playing Space Invaders at home was making companies zillions of dollars whilst, in the UK, Uncle Clive was preparing to post us old folk the first 16K ZX Spectrums. Meanwhile, in America three dentists had $7 million burning a whole in their white pockets, and wanted to make an investment in the infant video games market. They formed a company called Hi-Toro, which later (thankfully) changed to Amiga, and took on Jay Miner, RJ Mical, Dave Morse and Carl Sassenrath.







▲ **Uncle Clive's ZX81. Built with the mass market in mind but failed to take off in great numbers.**

1983

Code-named Lorraine (named after the wife of the Hi-Toro president) was the ultimate video game console in development, featuring state-of-the-art custom chips to provide unimaginable graphics and sound. In Silicon Valley, while Amiga built joysticks as cover, the Amiga Inc team got busy.



▲ 1983 saw numerous releases: Mattel's Aquarius, the Atari 600L... meanwhile, Amiga Inc were busy...

However as the video game boom faded, the killer games console started to grow into a computer: a disk drive here, a keyboard there. Some parallel and serial ports, and a modem were added to schematics. There was even a hardware PC emulator and digital telephone answering machine in the plans.

Why not save trouble and make the Amiga totally PC compatible computer to start with? Why use a Motorola processor?

Jolyon Ralph: "At the time it was the only choice, the 80x86 family did not offer a protected mode 32-bit memory model that was essential for a multitasking OS. It wasn't until the 386 CPU that Intel finally had a processor capable of running a realistic multitasking OS, and that OS didn't appear as a mainstream PC operating system until the advent of Windows NT and Windows 95."

The choice of a Motorola processor meant PC compatibility was never going to be easy. Was the 68000 a mistake?

Jim Hawkins: "Not really. Motorola chips are more elegant and in most cases deliver a lot more output per input. Apple still use Motorola chips, and although they're doing badly at present, they still have substantial market share. Users don't give a toss what's in the box. They want applications."

1984

Although the custom chips hadn't been finished and only existed as huge breadboards of stock chips and wiring, the heart of the machine was ready to be shown at the CES Show in January 1984. Although hidden behind a partition, visitors passing up a nearby escalator could catch glimpses of an amazing machine: the Boing! demo was unlike anything anyone had ever seen before.



Unfortunately the video game market was failing badly. Even Atari had made a few expensive mistakes (such as the ET cartridge in the desert escapade) and been bought by an ex-Commodore Business Machines employee Jack Tramiel. But Amiga Inc. was also in trouble, and need external investment. The decision to graft computer interfaces to the original Lorraine looked like being a lifeline.

After a lot of fun and games with Atari, it was finally Commodore who stepped in at the last minute with the money necessary to complete the project. Amiga Inc could continue development.

1985

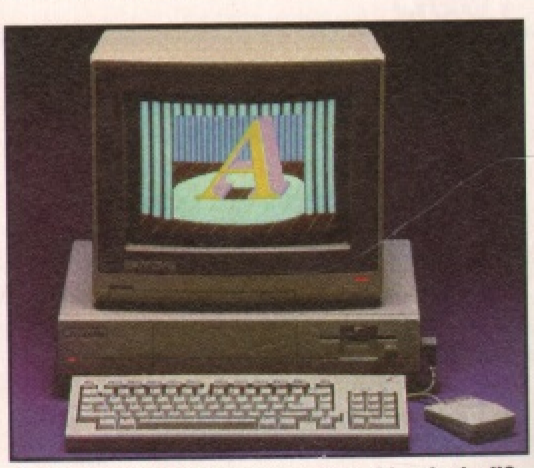
Commodore-Amiga made some changes to the Lorraine (the modem vanished, memory was doubled to 265K and double sided disk drives included as standard), but in June 1985 the Amiga 1000 was launched at the Lincoln Center in New York, with the aid of Debbie Harry and Andy Warhol. It was amazing.

Gone was the pretence at games machine, this was a workstation – before the term existed. With a unique modern PC-style case which could house an external keyboard underneath and that special coloured tick badge, the A1000 looked special. There was a two-button mouse, a 14MHz Motorola 68000 processor, 256K memory expandable to a whopping 512K, and a graphics display which could not only be genlocked but also offered a dazzling 4096 colours on-screen at once. And as for the operating system, no-one had seen a graphical orientated multitasking interface like it and the digital sound and speech synthesis made the current 286 PC look like a joke. However, serious errors were already being made.



▲ Glad to be grey? The all-singing, all-graphic Amiga made the C64 look ancient.

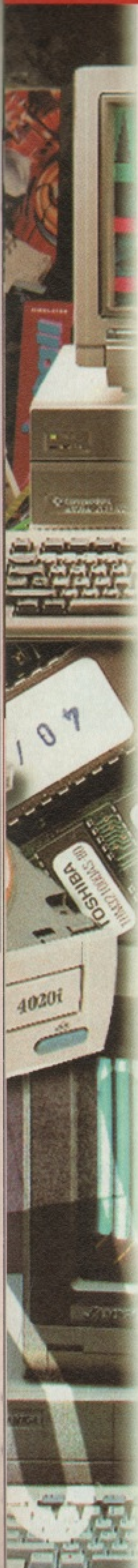
Jim: "The core problem goes right back to 1985 and a failure to seize the high ground for business and 'productivity' whilst paying lip service to it. We know from people who were at Apple at the time of the Amiga launch that Apple thought the Amiga was going to slay them. As soon as they saw that Commodore were half-hearted about the "serious" Amiga, and thought they could clean up much more quickly by promoting the Amiga as a C64 on rocket fuel, Apple and presumably IBM relaxed and went about making lots of money. Commodore ended up with a machine that fell between all stools and was consequently hard to market to just about anybody. In the States, they gave up on the games and business end and effectively handed it to NewTek to sell lots of Video Toasters, fly around in Lear jets, and behave like five-minute rock'n'roll successes. The UK ruthlessly targeted fourteen year-old nerds and sold a lot of A1200s to their mums and dads. The Germans used the higher end machines, presumably to design BMWs in their bedrooms."



▲ In the UK a £400 dream games machine, in the US it sold lots and lots of NewTek Video Toasters.



ILLUSTRATION: Helen Danby



1986

The Amiga 1000 was cool, but it was also expensive. Work started on the successor, the A2000. Two teams, one in America and one in Germany had designs, but the German A2000 version is the one that succeeded. Was the management at Commodore interested in the Amiga, or in the money it could make?

Jim: "If we assume that the general hardware and OS conception were good, then there's nowhere else for blame to rest than with Commodore US. The Commodore Board and CEO seemed to misunderstand just about everything, and they did it with amazing consistency. They had a very good hardware and software development team, and in their anxiety to chase the nearest buck they steadily allowed the Amiga's head-start over the Mac and PC to be eroded."



There were other forces at work too, not least the growth of the PC compatible. Jolyon doesn't lay the blame solely with the Commodore bosses:

Jolyon: "No, the Commodore management wasn't entirely to blame. It was because of the ruthlessly successful management of Microsoft by Bill Gates that all rival systems suffered. Even the once-mighty Apple is now a mere shadow of its former self, despite doing all the 'right' things – adopting PPC technology early, enhancing the operating system, keeping up with modern technology and making their machines affordable.

Gates has twisted the world market into his model so successfully that if the computer doesn't run all the Microsoft applications then no-one wants it."

As Teijo Kinnunen, points out, a lack of software didn't help:

Teijo: "The management contributed a great deal to the failure of the Amiga, but there were probably other factors, too, like the lack of serious business software and support from many major companies."

1987

The A2000 and A500 were launched. The A2000 came in a huge box with many internal expansion slots. In response to the growing dominance of the IBM-PC clone, it was even possible to fit a special "bridgeboard" and use PC-style expansion cards.

The A500 was launched in the UK on the 12th June, and did away with the expansion slots (besides a "trapdoor" memory and an expansion port on the side) to form a complete, single box unit. It sold for £587, and against its deadly rival the Atari ST it looked over-priced, but extremely sexy.



▲ Commodore's market share-winning bundles.

1988

Tramiel was a sore looser, and tried to regain control of the Amiga by claiming in court that the Amiga was developed with the money lent by Atari. The legal challenge failed.



▲ Commodore vs Atari: a regular spat.

1989

The Amiga's unique custom chips were upgraded slightly to produce the Fat Agnus: capable of addressing twice the amount of Chip RAM – a stunning 1Mb. But the Operating System was slow in changing. Why was it stagnating?

Jim: " It was strangled. The last few years of the Amiga saw a steady focus on the stupider end of the market, and since most games were throwing the OS away anyway, why spend money on WB4.0 ?"

Jolyon: "Commodore lost too many good people towards the end, to Scala, to 3DO and to anyone else that would pay them. Microsoft figured that, as they had a captive market, everyone would have to catch up with new hardware, and they were proven right.

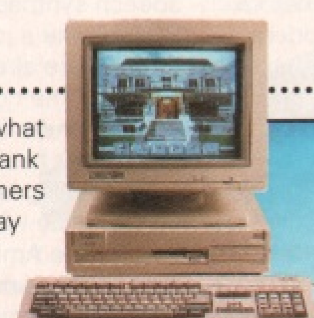
Nowadays, the minimum requirements for an operating system, if it is to be taken seriously, are drastically higher than before. Things such as networking, quality printing, disk recovery/repair, support for latest generation devices, object-oriented layout for development – all these things are taken for granted in a modern OS.

The Amiga OS is so far behind on all these things that nothing bar a straight rewrite would remedy the situation, and if we're rewriting AmigaOS, it might be a good idea to remedy the design flaws in the low level architecture (particularly graphics/intuition), and start from scratch."

1990

Overdue it may have been, but the A3000 was launched complete with the all-new Workbench 2.0. Out went Orange and Blue and 68000s, in came Blue and Grey and 68030s. The A3000 was the first 32-bit Amiga and came packed with features. A SCSI interface as standard, the ability to use standard SVGA monitors. It was fast, sleek and many Amiga users today still rate it as the best Amiga ever made.

The CDTV also first saw the light of day. At a staggering £699, the CDTV was a 1Mb A500 and CD-ROM player in an extremely smart black box. Ahead of it's time it may have been, but "overpriced and lacking in software" is what it was described as, and it sank horribly. (Existing Amiga owners got the A570 CD-ROM to play with.)



Jim: "The CDTV was rushed out to beat CDi. It should have had AGA and fast RAM and a faster processor. But it was engineered to a price that dictated an underpowered machine. But it was in many other respects a far better unit than the CD32, and with more money put in could have been successful. Still, it was no worse a disaster than CDi, and a hell of a lot cheaper."

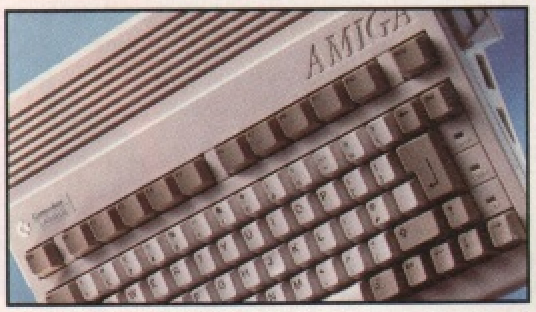


▲ Black and sexy, shouted Commodore. It's overpriced and the software's wrong, said everyone else.

1992

The A500 ceases to be (although the A500Plus appears as a "limited edition" for a short while). The A600 was launched for £399. It was cheaper to make than the A500 (using Surface Mount technology) but offered less expansion and lacked a numeric keyboard. Three months later the price of the A600 is dropped to £299 and a lot of users are very unhappy.

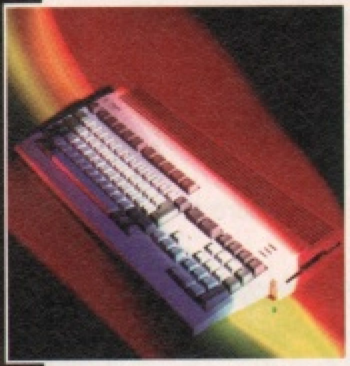
Jolyon: "The decline of Commodore was the fault of top management. They were fanatical about making Commodore a $1bn company. It was their dream and they totally disregarded all other business decisions to do this. They employed more people, they went after markets that they didn't need. They scrapped their most successful computer ever (Amiga 500) and then they released a new model (A600) that no-one wanted."



1993



▲ A4000, A2200, A600, A500, A2400, A300+, A1200... would you believe the market was confused?



▲ By Christmas 1993 the A1200 was top dog.

Rumours of new chipsets were partly proved to be correct, with the launch of the A4000. Featuring the AGA's 16 million colours, the A4000 was the first Amiga to use the massively powerful Motorola 68040 processor, although a cheaper 68030 version was also available. Exciting as it appeared, the A4000 was far from perfect though.

Jolyon: "The A4000 was originally designed as an ECS Amiga, and the A2200 and A2400 were designed as a cheap replacement for the Amiga 2000 which was too expensive to build. The A2200 would have had two Zorro slots, the A2400 four. It was a mid-range machine designed to sell for a few hundred pounds, with the Amiga 3000 remaining the high-end machine.

With the advent of AGA, the A2200/2400 board was hacked to include the AGA chipset to produce machines for early developers. These were meant to be called the A3200/A3400, although only the A3400 was ever made in any quantity. It was never intended as a production machine, only as a small volume test computer system for games developers. The design was lousy, the chip RAM bus was slow, the CPU card system was the same as on the Amiga 3000, which meant the CPU couldn't access motherboard memory at full speed, there was no SCSI, only CPU-driven IDE which killed CPU performance during drive access — a total disaster for multimedia.

But this didn't matter because it wasn't intended for production, just for a few games developers. The real machine was the Amiga 3000+. This was based on the A3000 motherboard, had AGA, fast SCSI, had the new DSP technology for sound and modem, networking, and fitted in a standard Amiga 3000-style case.

Unfortunately, in one of Medhi Ali's less clever moments, he decided that the A3000+ would cost too much and scrapped the project, leaving Commodore with no alternative but to go into production with their cobbled-together prototype system – the Amiga 3400, or as it's now known the Amiga 4000."

Jim: "It was a dire design controlled by a PC-orientated head of engineering. It looks horrible, compared to the A3000. When it was unveiled to a bunch of developers including me at Maidenhead we simply couldn't believe that they'd left the SCSI off. They managed to achieve some appalling hardware timing problems. It was horribly expensive. And to produce this they ditched the A3000+, which was a great design and would have been the first perfect Internet machine. As usual, we could see the American technicians and software support people trying to praise it through gritted teeth; again, they have been ignored, patronised, abused, and generally treated like garbage. The only good thing to be said for the A4000 was that it was a bit faster than the A3000 and had AGA."

The Christmas market was lost in confusion, as the A1200 started to appear on shelves. Outclassing the A500/600, it was the machine to own – if you could find one. The A1200 was one of the best Amiga's ever designed, taking the A500 approach but cRAMming in as much as possible. A 68020 was fitted as standard, the IDE interface was now starting to look like a good idea, and the new Workbench was showing Window's users what a bit of intelligence and some custom hardware could achieve.

1994



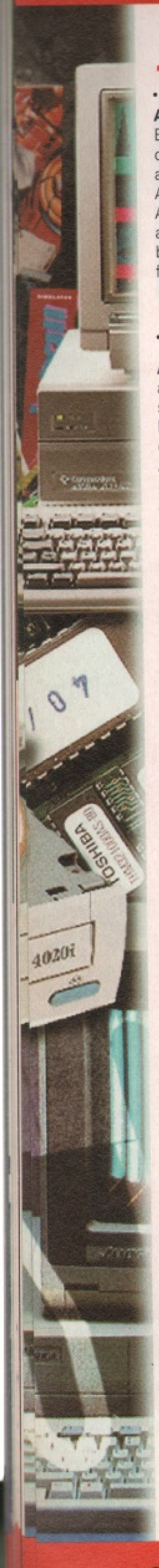
▲ The CD32: "Commodore really believed the games houses would rally round it."

A miracle of cost control, the CD32 was so very nearly a world beater. Riding the second video game boom wave, it could have been massive, as it included the internals of an A1200 and a double-speed CD-ROM drive at a sensible price. However, no matter how much Commodore depended on it to change their fortunes, success was not forthcoming.

Jim: "It was never going to be. It was a last-ditch panic by the management. They knew that only the CD32 could save them. That confusion between serious and silly that started in about 1986 reached its last act with CD32, which was too little, too late, and had some very silly cost-reducing design screw ups. Commodore management really believed the games houses would rally round and save the day through the CD32... actually they mostly said "goodnight" and bought more PCs."

Jolyon: " The CD32 hadn't been out long when news of the Playstation was leaked, and people waited for the PSX, or even for the N64."

In March, Commodore admitted to financial problems, linked to poor sales and their disastrous foray into the PC market. In April, staff were laid off. Finally, Commodore went bust, and the liquidators moved in. Proceedings were based in the Bahamas for "legal reasons".



1995

After a long wait and a lot of rumours, ESCOM purchased the Amiga. They created Amiga Technologies, and announced a new Tower-based A4000 and the restart of A1200. Both machines appeared in limited numbers by the end of the year, and for once it looked as though things might be going right for a change.



Jolyon: "AT were a nice bunch of people, but three people working in a hut in Germany can't resurrect a computer system as far behind as the Amiga was. They were given a difficult task. Sell a computer that's three years out of date for £100 more than it originally cost into a market where no-one's developing games for it any more. Frankly it's a testament to their skill that they sold so many..."



1996

After financial problems, most of them associated with a huge and rapid expansion of High Street PC shops, ESCOM go bust in July. Viscorp make known their desire to purchase the rights to the Amiga. At a press conference in Toulose, they announced their plans to support the Amiga computer and to use it as the basis of an Internet-friendly "set-top" box.

1997

More delays, more rumours and worse to come: Viscorp fail to get the capital together to buy the Amiga. What went wrong?

Jim: "Possibly because the web of highly complex inter-company rights and ownerships set up by Medhi Ali and others to protect their interests made it very hard to go forward. Possibly because nobody in the USA ever had any idea how to sell the Amiga and still hasn't."



After another delay, it's announced that the new owners of Amiga Technologies are Gateway 2000, a PC clone manufacturer. What are they going to do with a machine which hasn't been developed since 1994?

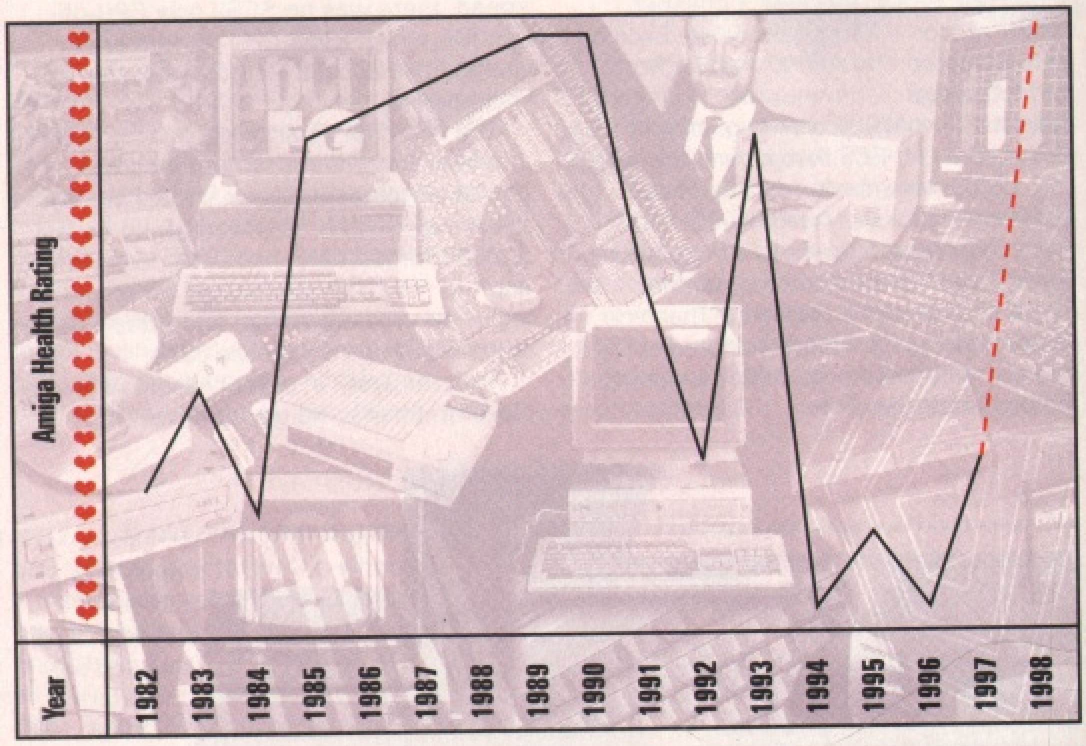
Time Line

1982 Lorraine conceived
1983 Hi-Toro formed and Lorraine is designed as games console that can be expanded into computer.
1984 First showing at CES. Hardware specs included 256K RAM, and amazing 4096 colours on-screen at once. Amiga bought by Commodore.
1985 Launch of Amiga 1000, New York, June 1995.
1986 Work starts on A500 and A2000.
1987 A2000 and A500 (£587) launched in March. (Spectrum Plus 3 goes on sale for £250, Atari 512STM is £399)
1988 A500 price cut to £499. (Atari 512STM is £299, A2000 is £1250)
1989 MusicX released. Viking graphics card and monitor offers a 1000 by 1000 flickerree display in four colours for £1700. 512K memory expansion for A500 is £120. HiSoft BASIC is launched, and a Commodore A2620 card (14MHz 68020, 2Mb RAM costs £1615).
1990 A3000 launched, Video Toaster goes on sale. AMOS released. 85Mb hard drive costs £999.
1991 CDTV on sale (£699). 68030 accelerator for A2000 costs £499. KCS Power PC Board (a hardware PC emulator for the A500) is £299.
1992 Amiga 600 launched (£399, price drops after three months to £299)
1993 Amiga 4000 launched, A1200 launched.
1994 CD32 launched. Commodore go bust.
1995 ESCOM buy Amiga.
1996 ESCOM go bust. Viscorp attempt to buy Amiga.
1997 Viscorp fail to raise capital. Gateway 2000 buys Amiga.
1998 Gateway 2000 take the Amiga to new heights and conquers the world. Or maybe not!
1999 World ends as giant mutant star goat eats entire Solar System.

Great Failures

Commodore have had more than their fair share of disasters. The CBM64 was such a hit, they seemed to be under the impression they could sell anything. The Plus4 and C128 proved otherwise.

The Amiga A500 was a terrific hit, and sold more than any other home computer ever. However, the huge delay in upgrading it (rumour has it CBM lost the plans to the custom chips and had to re-engineer them from scratch) and the eccentric CDTV didn't do them any favours. The CDTV was launched as a multimedia machine, and use of the words "Amiga" or "home computer" were banned. The high price and bizarre marketing policies didn't help, but as sales of the CDi prove, no-one really wants a hi-fi style box with pretensions.



Many thanks to the following for their time and effort. Apologies to those whose opinions we had to leave out due to lack of time, space and for legal reasons!
Teijo Kinnunen: author of the premier Amiga music programs, OctaMed and SoundStudio.
Jim Hawkins: veteran Amiga developer, responsible for many Amiga and CDTV projects.
Jolyon Ralph: Amiga programmer of all trades, from demos to commercial applications.

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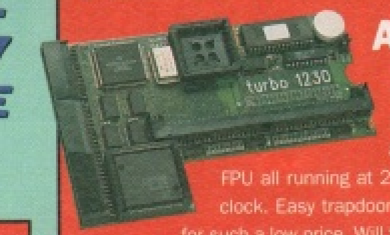
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An interview with Eric Schwartz



Eric Schwartz made his name in the late '80s as one of the Amiga's most innovative animators. Life, the Amiga and Eric have all moved on...

CU: ***How did you first come across the Amiga and what prompted you to create your first Amiga animation?***

ES: I've had an interest in the Amiga ever since computer magazines covered it in 1985-86. Back then it was the only thing that was considered to be a "graphics" computer, (I already had a Commodore 64 at the time) so my curiosity was naturally aroused. This eventually led to my parents getting me an Amiga 500 at the very end of 1988. At the time, my dad was pressuring me to consider something "IBM-compatible", but has since changed his mind. I wanted to create animations immediately, but it took a while to get the right software for the job (this was the time of Dpaint II). I created my first anim, "Stealthy Manoeuvre" shortly after buying a then-new piece of software called Moviesetter. The rest is history.

I plan to remain with the Amiga until my needs outgrow what it can provide

CU: ***Was the Amiga your first animation medium, or did you have any previous experience with more traditional animation techniques?***

ES: I've been heavily into animation ever since I first grasped the concept. I have touched on such prerequisites as flip-books and super-8 film, and I did many crude early attempts with cut paper in a Terry Gilliam-ish fashion. I even tried out some very primitive animation software for the C-64 (all graphics for the entire animation had to fit on ONE screen). The Amiga finally allowed me the freedom to produce some quality work, and fuelled many improvements in style and technique. I'm not as good as I'd like to be, but I'm satisfied with how I've progressed over the past eight years.

CU: ***Name a couple of your favourite anims and tell us how long they took you to complete.***

ES: It's hard to pinpoint specific animations that I would call my favourites, but there are several that tend to stand out. The Flip the Frog cartoons, Amy vs Walker 2, Anti-Lemmings, and Aerotoons such as Gulf Conflict and Unsporting seem to hold up pretty well, even considering most of them are five years old or more. I have a special soft spot for the Sabrina cartoon "Plight of the Artist", which was released on my CD-ROM (see review on page 70-71), mainly because it took the most time and effort to make. You didn't specifically ask, but I consider my worst animation to be "At the Movies" – it doesn't quite pull off the jokes in the way I intended.

The time it takes to do an animation varies a lot. Anywhere from six hours to six months. Most of what I consider my better works could have taken between a few weeks to a few months, depending on length and complexity.

CU: ***Do you often look back and wish you'd changed bits around or are you generally happy with your finished animations?***

ES: I'm usually pretty happy with an animation by the time it's finished. A lot of my older stuff looks crude to me now, because my abilities (artistically and technologically) have grown over time.



▲ There's a soft spot for Sabrina in Schwartz's heart.

The Schwartz file



Full name:
Eric W. Schwartz.

Age:
25, but I'll eventually be 26.

Computer setup:
A4000T, With 18Mb, Vlab Motion, Tocatta, Cybervision 64, extra serial & parallel ports, big hard drives, and stickers on it.

Also in the place there's an A3000, A2500, A2000, A1200, A500, A1000, and a CD-32!

Interests (other than Amiga):
Model-building (almost abandoned), drawing and cartooning in general. Oh yes, I own two pet chinchillas, and have become a hobbyist chin breeder – although not necessarily by choice.

Successes:
Probably the biggest personal success is winning one category of the Italian Bit.Movie contest (a prestigious international computer graphics event) enough times in a row that they asked me to take a break for a year.





◀ He's inspired by cartoons that are chock-full of personality.



◀ Disney Animation Studio provides most of the animation.

I consider it history though, and I probably wouldn't rework them, even if I was given the opportunity.

CU: ***Where do your ideas come from? Have they come in dreams as with Bullfrog supremo Peter Molyneux?***

ES: Not that I know of. Ideas have come from all sources and are pretty much random, from observations to suggestions from friends. Usually, most of my ideas tend to stew for a while, which is probably for the best, as it improves a good idea and weeds out the weak ones.

CU: ***Where do you draw your inspiration from? Who were your cartoonist role models?***

ES: I've always been a fan of the short cartoons of the forties and fifties, especially the work of Warner Bros. director Chuck Jones. Over time I've drawn inspiration from television animation such as Batman, Animaniacs, and the rare British show to appear in the US such as Dangermouse. I'm more taken with animated movies and shows that are entertaining and show personality and humour more than just artistry or technical proficiency. To give an example, a favourite Disney film of mine from the last few years was A Goofy Movie, a low-budget film which I found more genuinely entertaining than their big musical spectacle films.

CU: ***Tell us how you put together a typical Amiga animation.***

ES: The way I create animations has changed over time, but starts out with an idea, which is refined into a number of layout drawings and a rough storyboard to decide how the animation work itself will be done. Then the animation drawing commences, usually with the Disney Animation Studio software. I've done the actual drawing work several ways over the years, from drawing directly with the mouse to using a pen tablet or even drawing on the monitor and tracing it.

Nowadays I usually do all the drawing on punched paper and scan them. Once the line drawings are in the Amiga, I'll colour them with a paint package like Dpaint, Brilliance, or Personal Paint. If, like most of my work, it's a Moviesetter anim, I'll break the anims up into separate images and feed them into Moviesetter to create the animbrush-like "sets". The sets and background images are put together with sounds in Moviesetter to create a finished animation.



Moviesetter is an old piece of software, but there's currently nothing else with its capacity for efficient hobbyist animation.

CU: ***Have you ever tried 3D and if so how does it compare to drawing in 2D?***

ES: I view 3D as just another tool, similar to the way many animation studios use 3D so they don't have to produce difficult drawings of vehicles and inanimate objects to use in 2D animation. I tend to prefer the look and freedom offered by 2D animation. For example, it's possible to create images in 2D that are impossible to recreate in 3D, because a three-dimensional object has limits.

CU: ***It's possible to create 3D models to create animations which look exactly as if they were drawn in the traditional 2D manner. In the future, will you create your cartoons entirely in 3D?***

ES: I tend to prefer the inherent freedom of 2D animation, but anything is possible. Currently, I don't have the skills in Lightwave to produce good character animation, but I may try to produce some experimental 3D works.

CU: ***Will you be with the Amiga right 'till the end and where do you think the machine is headed?***

ES: I plan to remain with the Amiga until my needs outgrow what it can provide. I have 'outgrown' a number of systems, but rarely have I run into a situation where I couldn't get by, and never have I hit a problem that required a PC or Macintosh to solve. I have worked on an A500, A2000, A1200 and currently use an A4000T (with CD-ROM, Jaz drive, Vlab Motion, CyberVision 64, 18Mb RAM and 3 Gb of storage). I look forward to PowerPC or whatever becomes the next Amiga. ■

Interview by Jason Brown

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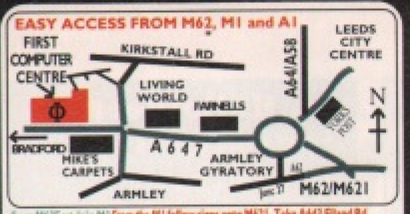
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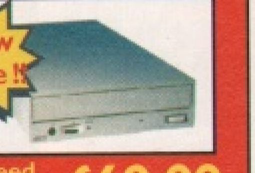


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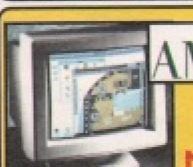
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Screen Scene



Welcome to the land of Amiga entertainment. A spooky multimedia CD head to head, an interview with the author of TFX and the chance to see any game you want on the Amiga!



Want this on the Amiga? 39

Previews

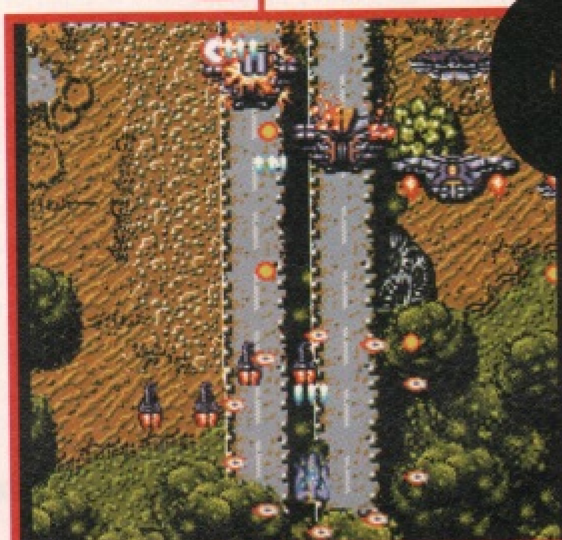
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Interview

Tips & Guides



Wendetta 38



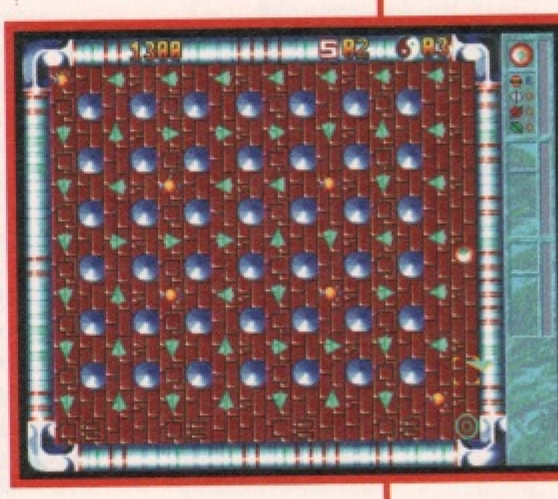
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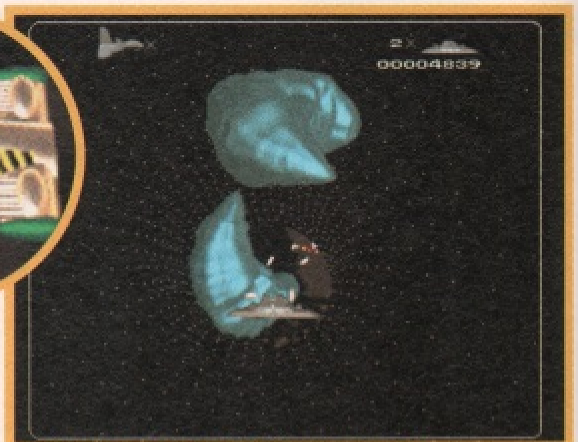
Previews

Wendetta

■ **Due for release: Late May** ■ **Developer: Vortex Design**

■ **Distributor: Islona ✆ 0500 131 486**





Wendetta: attack of the killer blue space croissants!



People come up to me and ask "Andrew, why is it that Amiga games suck so much?" I point them in the direction of Speedball 2, WormsDC, Dune 2, SWOS and the like, and they say "Oh yeah, they're pretty cool, hunh hunh" at which point I inform them they're watching too much Beavis and Butthead. The problem with Amiga games is fashion, and I'm not trying to imply that it's Jean Paul Gaultier's fault for programming in AMOS instead of learning machine code. The point is that all the great games I've mentioned are based on scrolling screens, which the Amiga does brilliantly, rather than 3D which requires the kind of horse power the Amiga is hard pressed to provide (kind of). Wendetta mixes old style 'sprites and scrolling screens' gameplay with the pseudo 3D tunnel effect familiar from many a demo. And it looks absolutely fantastic.

Wendetta spends most of it's time as a horizontal blaster in the mould of Fraxxion, R-Type or Project X. The difference is that the fantastic AGA graphics make all those games look primitive. The aliens attack in the standard swirling assault waves, but the ships are all beautifully rendered 3D objects and whizz around very quickly and very smoothly. Every odd level or so, Wendetta bursts into 3D mode as you fly into a swirling tunnel, enemies spinning and spiralling as they hurtle towards the screen. The alien craft here are all pre-rendered so they spin and zoom at the same time without any loss of speed.

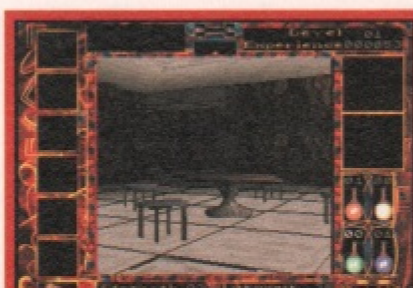
Promising fast and furious action, two player antics, and silly amounts of fire-power, Wendetta looks the business. But does the old fashioned style of gameplay survive into the modern era? If you don't want to rush and buy an import from Weird Science to find out now, you'll have to wait for the full review next month! ■

Andrew Korn

Trapped

■ **Due for release: Mid May** ■ **Developer: Oxyron**

■ **Distributor: Weird Science ✆ 0116 2340682**



Trapped





I'm going to spare you the "they said it couldn't be done" cliché. It's reeled out every time any Amiga game comes along with a Doom engine in it. Everyone knows that it can be done. Breathless, Fearless, Gloom and Alien Breed 3D proved that years ago. Trapped is just another nail in the coffin of a scepticism that was buried ages ago.



On the other hand things like 3D levels, complex texture maps, full light sourcing, lens flare, unique 3D objects, all moving at a good speed on a ton's worth of acceleration, is surely out of the Amiga's grasp. Wrong. With coders like those who bless the Amiga community, who needs 3D graphics chips? OK, so those coders *and* a 3D graphics chip, now you're talking, but until games start coming out supporting the CyberGL 3D graphics library on the Cybervision 3D card, you'll have to be satisfied with the likes of Trapped.

Trapped is a fairly unusual piece of software in the Doom clone world. It eschews the standard guns and blasters model for a slower more thoughtful game of swords and spells. That's right, Trapped isn't just an every day Doom clone, it is a fully fledged RPG with a Doom engine. Think Dungeon Master meets Genetic Species.

There is of course plenty of fighting to be done. Assorted bandits, bugbears and bats launch themselves at you and unless you are quick with your trusty steel, you'll see your own blood streaming down the screen in no time.

There are plenty of the standard sort of puzzles, but Trapped contains a lot more depth than that. There are much more complex puzzles than normal for this sort of thing, a variety of potions for you to collect, and a complex and unusual spell casting system. Spread over 13 levels, Trapped looks like the kind of game which could keep you glued to your screen for a long, long time. ■

Andrew Korn

ClickBOOM Wish List


Duke Nukem 3D


Civilization


Diablo


Monkey Island 3


Red Alert

ClickBOOM, authors of the Amiga's top beat-em up game Capital Punishment and producers of the forthcoming conversion of MYST have announced exciting plans for the future of Amiga gaming. If you have been wondering when we would start talking about what these new PowerPC boards can do for gamers, then you'll be glad to hear that ClickBOOM and phase 5 have announced co-operation. Alexander Petrovic of ClickBOOM says "We strongly believe that the future for the Amiga computer lies in PowerPC processors. Furthermore, we believe phase 5 is, and will continue to be, the Amiga hardware leader. Therefore, we have selected Power Amiga as our future platform of choice."

The first game to get the PPC treatment will be MYST, but the exciting bit is that with the power that the PPC chip offers, ClickBOOM will be able to expand their policy of converting the best that other platforms have to offer. There are plenty of titles out there that the Amiga in its present state is more than capable of coping with – MYST being one example, titles such as Command and Conquer and Monkey Island 3 are others. With the power of PPC behind them, the whole thing is blown wide open, with market leading titles such as Quake, Tomb Raider and Duke Nukem 3D all suddenly becoming entirely possible.



With this in mind, ClickBOOM have published a "wish list" of games they would be interested in licensing and want to know what you, the Amiga gaming public think. You can join the multitude voting direct from the ClickBOOM web site on http://www.clickboom.com where an amazing 1500 votes were registered on the first day. Of course lots of you don't have Internet access, so to save you the trouble of posting to Canada, CU Amiga Magazine is taking votes for ClickBOOM. Just fill in the form below and post it to us. We'll send the whole lot over to ClickBOOM. If the incentive of being able to play the very best games available on your Amiga isn't enough, the excellent folks at ClickBOOM are giving 3 copies of MYST and 3 copies of Capital Punishment to 6 lucky voters.

CU AMIGA MAGAZINE

Your chance to vote for the future of Amiga gaming!

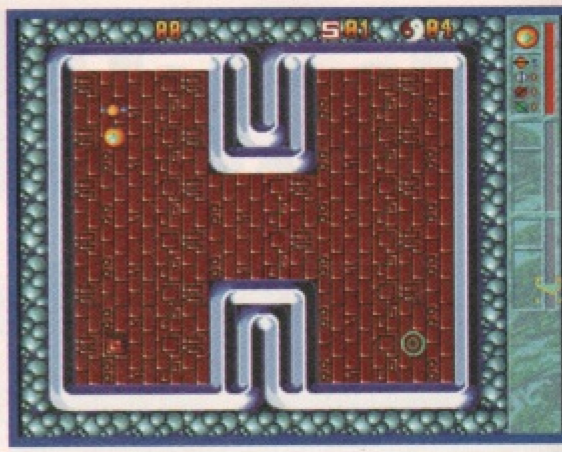
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Battle Arena Toshinden	❏	Indy Car Racing 2	❏	Tekken	❏
Battle Isle	❏	MDK	❏	Terminal Velocity	❏
Civilization 2	❏	Mech Warrior	❏	TFX	❏
Command and Conquer	❏	Mortal Kombat 3	❏	Theme Hospital	❏
Dark Forces	❏	Monkey Island 3	❏	Tomb Raider	❏
Daytona	❏	Need For Speed	❏	Ultima VIII	❏
Descent	❏	NHL 97	❏	VF	❏
Diablo	❏	Red Alert (C&C2)	❏	Warcraft2	❏
Doom	❏	Putty Squad	❏	Wing Commander 2-4	❏
Duke Nukem 3D	❏	Quake	❏	Wipeout 2097	❏
Earthworm Jim	❏	Resident Evil	❏	X-Wing & TIE Fighter	❏

Just place a tick next to the three games you would most like to see on your Amiga and post this form (or a photocopy) to:
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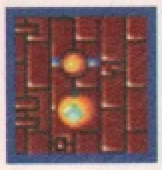
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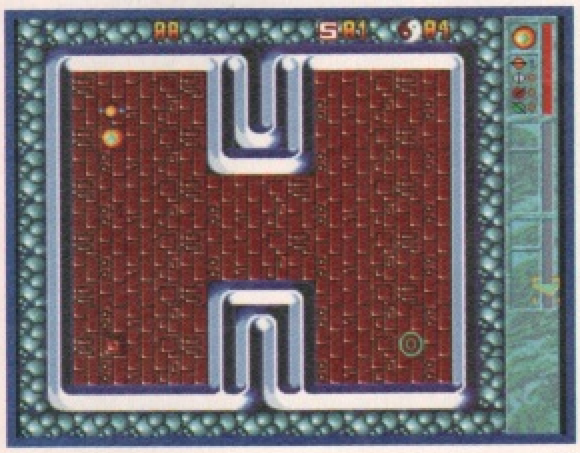


■ Price: £7.99 ■ Publisher: Islona/Epic Marketing ✆ 0500 131 486

Marbleous mixes basic arcade and puzzle ingredients and serves them up quite nicely. Admittedly it's pretty standard stuff: you have to guide a marble along while picking up some useful power items and find your way out to the exit. Once that is done it's on to the next level. The action is semi-controlled by yourself using the mouse to select the direction in which you want you want the ball to travel. All this has to be done fairly quickly as the ball continually rolls as soon as the game starts – or you will witness instant destruction when you hit the sides of the walls surrounding the levels.



Alternatively, you can put down a stop sign or something which stops the ball from moving, but only for a limited time that is.



Some of the levels contain electrical currents, holes, moving platforms, the usual stuff that annoys us the most. Luckily, if you're a bit slow like me, you can press the space-bar to pause the game at any time and work out your next strategy. The good news is that once you have completed several levels you are given a password, so you can always return where you left off after you've given your head a well earned rest. There's none of this going back to the beginning nonsense that many games have adopted lately.

The only one thing I found a problem were the mouse controls – they were a bit fiddly and annoying at times. If you've played any puzzle games on a computer you'll know how ultra-frustrating they can be... so frustrating they can make you want to throw your joystick at the screen. And, at other times, they will make you purr with satisfaction – whenever you've cracked a difficult puzzle, of course. Most times, it's worth getting past the irritatingly difficult bits just to achieve moments of real bliss and satisfaction whenever you kick a game into touch. I persisted with this game, and I was glad: I haven't always liked puzzle games but this isn't a bad buy for £7.99. For that you get a hefty one hundred levels of brain-tickling fun. If you're looking for a challenging, value-for-money addictive puzzler, look no further than this. Bloody marbleous it ain't, but it is a bit crazy, quite taxing, and there are far, far worse things to spend your money on. ■

Mark Forbes

CD32 A500 A500+ A600 A1200 A1500 A2000 A3000 A4000

63%

Mega Typhoon



■ Price: £7.99 ■ Publisher: Islona/Epic Marketing ✆ 0500 131 486

When I sat down to play Mega Typhoon, my initial impressions were "Hey, someone's decided to rip-off the old C64 shoot-em-ups that I used love playing!".

You start your mission with a lone starfighter with some very puny lasers. At this stage it's still got a very handy set of lasers with which you can take out just about anything moving, but you'll have to set your joystick to auto-fire. While Mega Typhoon is a typical vertical shoot-em-up, you can move a little to the left and right while picking up some useful extra laser power-ups, missiles, homing missiles, side-shots and extra lives. You can also press the space bar which activates a smart bomb weapon that effectively wipes out any opposing enemy ships in the vicinity. Once you've got to grips with what's going on, it's on to the next world. As I said earlier, Mega Typhoon still reminds of some old C64 shoot-em-ups from the old days, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. However, the game's title screen blurb claims that Mega Typhoon is "the fastest arcade action game ever made for the Amiga computer". The game is indeed fast, and the action is as frenetic as anything you've seen on the Amiga in a long while... but the in-game graphics are pretty basic and colourless – chunky sprites are something that we shouldn't be seeing on today's Amiga. The sound is sadly lacking with only a few effects for explosions and lasers and a racey-but-unobtrusive soundtrack at the beginning. Mega Typhoon is a playable game, it's just that I've seen the Amiga do better with Hybris, Battle Squadron, Swiv, or Xenon 2 – all of which were released ages ago!!! In my opinion, what you are getting here is a shareware game with a larger cut for the authors. Is the Amiga player getting his money's worth? Sorry, but I think not. Mega Typhoon is an average game that hasn't really much to offer the already saturated shoot-em-up genre. Which is a shame because we all know that the Amiga can do so much better than this. Instead, check out a CD-ROM game called Wendetta, which is also from Islona, and which is previewed on page 38 of this very issue! ■





Mark Forbes

CD32 A500 A500+ A600 A1200 A1500 A2000 A3000 A4000

74%

TURBOPRINT 5

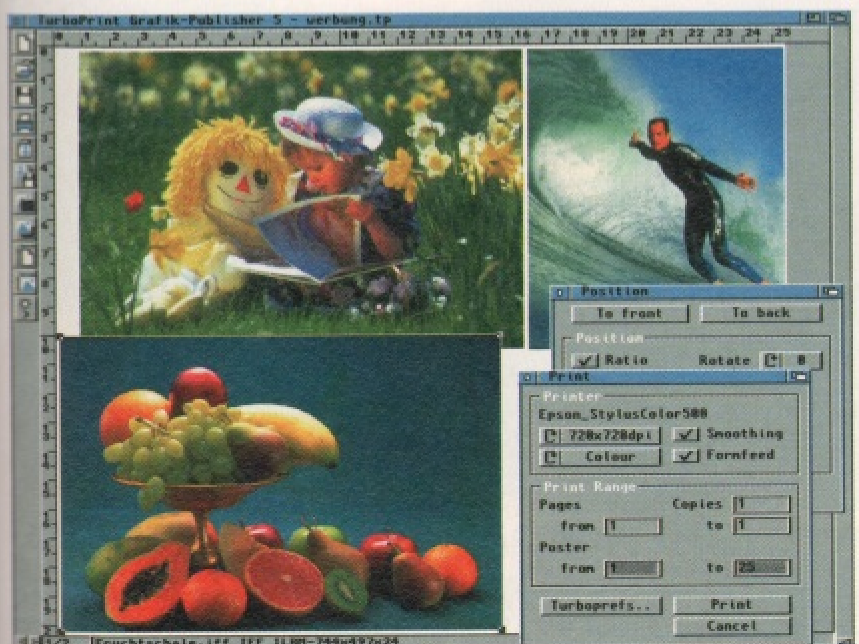
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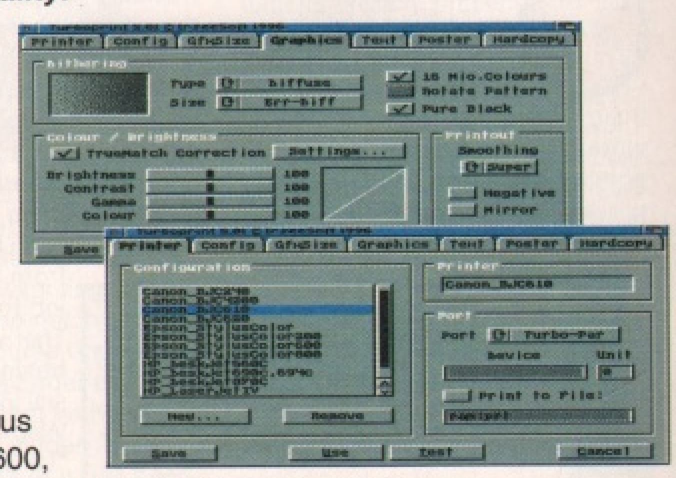
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The Hidden Truth

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

■ **Price: £24.95** ■ **Publisher: Sadeness Software © 01263 722169**



First came Women of the Web, and now Sadeness branches out into the Fortean. Weirdness of the Web, anyone? Or would you rather see an Epic Encyclopedia which has been positively possessed?



▲ **The Hidden Truth's custom, frame-based front end: a rather stylish HTML design.**

There is a saying that if you gave an infinite number of monkeys an infinite number of keyboards, they would eventually write Hamlet. As someone recently pointed out to me, the Internet proves them wrong. Instead they mostly produce web sites about the US government conspiracy to institute a new world order and sell abductees to the Greys. Type the word "implant" into a web searcher and silicone comes a poor second to all those monkeys whose random typing has produced tales of unwholesome experimentation by pallid, extraterrestrial, three-fingered aliens.



The Hidden Truth is a collection of these web sites. Finding your way through the masses of paranormal rubbish to find the good stuff is hard work, not to mention a strain on your phone bill. So why don't you let the lads from Sadeness do the job for you?

That was the idea behind their controversial Women of the Web CD too, although "UFO" or "ESP" or "Mysteries" brings up marginally less hits on a search engine than typing "Babe" or "Sex" or even "Celebrity".

If you tried WOTW, you'll find significant changes in the presentation of The Hidden Truth. While WOTW took the images and presented them in a visual database system designed using the web page language HTML (Hyper Text Mark-up Language), The Hidden Truth actually presents full web sites the way we do in the WWW section of our CUCDs. The presentation is excellent, a strongly designed menu system allowing you to negotiate your way around the large collection of web sites.

As well as web pages covering everything from abductions, alien (the 20th Century equivalent of demonic possession) through to Zeta Reticulli, homeworld of the Greys, there is a very nice gallery of UFO photos and a page full of film and sound clips. The subject matter strays pleasingly around films, sci fi, unusual meteorology and space technology all finding their way into the melting pot. There is enough here to keep an interested reader going for a *VERY* long time.



▲ **Graphics cards make a real difference – the inset shows a 256 colour AGA display. Too many colours!**

Presentation

One area I looked at closely was the technical presentation of the CD, which I felt seriously let down Sadeness' previous effort. Most Interneters have Macs and PCs and are better catered for on the web browsing front, with graphics cards and easily available players for all sorts of anim and sound formats. WOTW seemed to rather ignore the Amiga user, with no support for movie clips and the choice of CybergraphX or a worthless 64 colour PAL mode for AGA owners. Sadeness have taken these complaints and done everything it can to address them, and I have to commend the company for doing a very good job of it.

When you click the Hidden Truth icon in the Amiga draw, you are presented with intuition requesters offering you a choice of screenmodes covering OCS, AGA and CybergraphX users, a choice of number of colours, and finally the option of displaying in grey scale. When you have gone through this simple procedure, you have a demo version of AWeb 2.1 up and running in the screenmode of your choice. Proper configuration of external viewers means that you can now click to view AVI and MPEG animations straight from the browser the way you should, and WAV files of all sorts can be played equally easily.

I still have reservations about the presentation, but compared to WOTW these are mere quibbles. Choosing AWeb could be defended on the basis of its stability, but it does leave AnimGifs unviewable, although you could use your own web browser. The other quibble would have to be that Sadeness has designed its menu pages on graphics-card-based Amigas and hasn't quite got them to suit AGA machines. There are just a few too many colours, and despite the use of a utility for optimising pen grabbing, the pages can get a little messy on 256 colour displays. Nevertheless, it looks good, it is absolutely packed with data, and although a graphics card makes the thing run a whole lot better, it is actually well worth using on AGA, which WOTW simply wasn't. ■

Andrew Korn

THE HIDDEN TRUTH

A500 / A500+ / A600 / A1200 / A1500 / A2000 / A3000 / A4000

system requirements:
CD-ROM drive, AGA, 4Mb RAM.
GFX card and 6Mb recommended.

presentation	88%
depth	95%
entertainment	89%

OVERALL
Less polished than its rival but more to explore. **90%**

The Epic Encyclopedia of the Paranormal

■ Price: £19.99 ■ Developer: Epic Marketing © 0500 131486

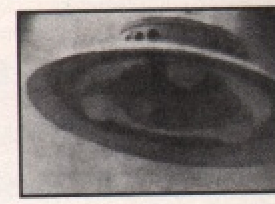
Epic Encyclopedia has been such a success it's spooky. Doing a special version on what is a very fashionable topic seems like a logical step, and as far as my Truth-is-Out-There-style researches can find, the simultaneous release of this and Hidden Truth is just a weird coincidence.

In complete opposition to the Sadeness disc, this one is entirely a custom approach. While I'm sure there was plenty of research done on the web, all the material in the encyclopedia is written specifically for it and is presented in a strict encyclopedic form, rather than the World Wide Web anarchy of the Hidden Truth. Instead of wandering randomly about, finding your way by luck more than judgement as with the Sadeness CD, you look up what you want to from an alphabetical list, and can even do searches to find the topic you are after.

On start up you are presented with a variety of options. You can check out a slide show of assorted images, or if you have a bit more memory you can watch a multimedia presentation with music and a voice-over. Once you have tired of that you can enter the encyclopedia proper, which is divided into subsections such as UFOs and Aliens or The Unexplained, an odd choice which can lead to some hunting around for the entry you are looking for. Select a subsection and you are offered a subject specific multimedia demo or you can enter into the Encyclopedia proper.



▲ A very polished and professional front end system. Navigation is easy and the gadgets are very well thought and laid out.







Polished end

Its front end has been polished up and cut down a little to make it more appropriate to the disc. It looks very good and runs smoothly, but a weird bug in the display causes screenmodes to be problematical. If your resolution is 400 pixels deep you can't click on the gadgets. NTSC, Euro 36 and Euro 72 modes leave the encyclopedia useless. You can cycle through the various images, play sampled sounds and voice overs, or view film clips from the click of a gadget.

The text appears, in a rather cramped form, in a box at the bottom of the page, with a couple more gadgets to print the text out or to view it in a much easier-to-read form on a full screen page with mouse controlled scrolling. The multimedia button, such a blessing on the full Encyclopedia, is missing. This was a huge bonus on the main CD, but its absence is not much of a problem. With a lot less entries to cram in, you won't find yourself struggling to find anything to look at. The wide variety of entries are covered in reasonable depth. Film clips in particular have improved, the film icon lighting up far more often than before with a good selection of animations of all sorts to view.



▲ A growly (and, alas, somewhat comedy) voice greets you as you visit each section. This is UFOs and Aliens.

The content of this disk is rather populist. Although open minded on the subject, I don't like to see pseudo science presented as fact with no dissenting voice, and there is far too much of that in this disc. Of course there is even more on the Sadeness disc, the difference is that with the web stuff on the Hidden Truth, you know that half of it has been written by kooks anyway.

Misinformation

Any Encyclopedia claims authority and accuracy and should therefore be sure of its facts. In a long tradition of encyclopedias of the paranormal, publications rarely bother with scientific accuracy or balance, as their audiences wouldn't accept that there isn't anything but the flimsiest circumstantial evidence that a UFO crashed in Roswell or that there have been less planes and boats missing in the Bermuda triangle than off the Cornish coast. This CD falls firmly into that category.

Forget the encyclopedia tag – you won't learn a thing about the real world from this CD. It's here entirely to intrigue, to fire the imagination and to thrill. Which it does with its brilliant, presentation. I'm just not sure that it does the reputation of the non-fiction, Epic branded Encyclopedia any favours.

Which to buy? A hard choice. They are surprisingly different and you wouldn't feel you had wasted your money if you got both. As a rough guide, Fortean Times readers will love the weirdness of the Hidden Truth, while readers of the less sceptical Encounters magazine are more likely to find the Epic offering to their taste. ■

Andrew Korn

PARANORMAL

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements:
2x CD-ROM. AGA, 4Mb RAM. Some features require 6Mb.

presentation	94%
depth	83%
entertainment	89%

OVERALL
Fine polish, nice price, but a little shallow. **87%**

Reach for the stars

With the Amiga conversion of TFX under his belt, Charlie Wallace now has a few questions left to answer...


TFX: The Amiga version



Name: ***Charlie Wallace***
Age: ***30***
Occupation: ***Game programmer.***
Biggest Successes: ***Worms and TFX***

CU: How did you get into computer games development?
CW: I started at school when I was 11 writing games for 8-bit computers, and started doing magazine listings. I was then approached by a small publisher and went from there.

"There were two real problems with the Amiga version: speed and memory"

CU: What projects did you work on before TFX?
Early game compilations like 100 Games for Your ZX81. At Mr Micro I was lead programmer on the PC version of Barbarian and worked on Amiga and ST Elite – my introduction to the Amiga. Afterwards, I worked for an arcade company designing and building arcade games. It gave me easy access to video game ROMs allowing me to do conversion work easily.

I wrote demos and shareware for a large Amiga demo group. I enjoyed working on the Amiga, it was a refreshing change from the PC. A friend in the group had interviewed at DID and had told them about me, and so off I went to do TFX Amiga. After that I worked on EF2000, Worms, World Rally Fever and some military stuff that I can't talk about.

CU: On a visit to DID a long time ago, we were told the PC original was written in C, which would be ported to form the core the Amiga engine. Surely speed would be a problem in this case?
CW: TFX was written mainly in C, with around 30% in assembly language. Using SAS/C on the Amiga I ported over the C, simulating a lot of the PC function calls. That gave me the ability to use the new code from TFX PC without having to rewrite the MSDOS specific parts. Then I ported over the 80x86 code to 680x0. From that I went through and hand optimised that code.

Most of the development time for the Amiga was spent trying to get it faster; exploring new avenues, copper tricks, chunky to planar and so on. I also had to add more assembly than the PC version to get more speed out of it. We tried as hard as we could to make it playable on the base A1200.

CU: What was your level of input on Amiga TFX?
CW: I was lead programmer and did most of the work, alongside Russell Payne, the designer of the original 3D engine, and eventually joined by Steve Monks who came in to finish off the project, because I had to go and work on TFX for the SGI.

CU: What problems did you encounter during its development?
CW: There were two real problems with the Amiga version: speed and memory. We had a game that was meant to run in 8Mb on a 486DX66, that we wanted to run on a 68020 with 2Mb of Chip RAM. The speed was just a question of profiling/rewriting and hand optimisation of even the compiler generated code. The memory was harder. We had to drop a few features, some of the worlds weren't quite as complex, sample sizes were reduced, and we had to cut down on object complexity. At the end of the project we were looking for a few kilobytes here and there.

CU: Why was Amiga TFX not released?
CW: Ocean felt that the market wasn't strong enough when it was finished. It was up to them to release it. We just waited to hear. I moved to Team 17 and am still waiting...

CU: With major technical innovations in TFX; texture mapping, shading, the virtual cockpit... Were you pleased with it?
CW: I was pleased with everything but the speed. I'd have preferred to have spent more time on it but we couldn't. I did keep working on it after I left and started to make it Workbench compliant so it could run on SVGA monitors and special graphics cards. We had a lot of plans for it, but they were scuppered by the goings on at Commodore. It does look nice against other Amiga flight sims. I was pleased that we kept the flight model as close the PC version as possible. In fact it had some improvements over TFX PC as the guy doing the model had more time to work on it and sort out a few problems. We also had the feedback from the PC owners and could make changes here and there.

CU: What are you working on now?
CW: I'm at Dreamworks SKG Interactive working on the Lost World: Jurassic Park II. It's a very complex system and we're really pushing out on this one. It's already being called a Quake killer. There's more information for your readers at: http://www.trespasser.com.

Tips Central

Taking over the tips helm from long time officiando Matt Broughton, this month we welcome Mark Forbes with more cheats and hints, while Tony Gill is on hand to answer all of your adventure game conundrums.

Super Stardust: CD32

Team 17

We start off this month with a few old CD releases. Team 17's Steve Heley has given us some wonderful codes for Super Stardust! Here we go...

ZZZZZZZZZZZ - Level 1 (Tons of Lives!)
BESUAAAACEY - Level 2 (4 lives)
CBSUTAAAGDG - Level 3 (2 lives)
DBSUSUARHJD - Level 3 (5 lives)
EDZZZVZSKGP - Level 4 (3 lives)

RoadKill CD32

Acid Software/Guildhall Leisure

This next lot of codes come from no less than the Guidhall Leisure game tester George Bray. Take it away Georgy boy!

Level 0 - LQPONTQNJO
Level 1 - LQPONRHCNM
Level 2 - LQPONUPQCK
Level 3 - LQPONTMBCH
Badlands Mega Smash - HQPOOOCENT

The Clue CD32

Neo Software Productions

Hannes Seifert of Neo Software very kindly gave me quite a few codes for the CD version of their game. Thanks Hannes!
290272, 030673, 145367, 823264, 253153, 569875, 0208074, 361791, 477321, 786186

Kang FU CD Amiga/CD32

Great Effects Development

All da way from da Netherlands, Kang FU had some nice graphics, but sadly never seemed to make much of an impact. Oh well, here are some handy level codes!
WALLY, BONGO, KLASS, LONDO, RIKEL

Castle Kingdoms

Mutation Software

Here is an exclusive cheat for Castle Kingdoms from Mutation's knight in shining armour himself, Mr Adrian Cummings! If you pause the game during play and press the keys A, R, C and press the left mouse button and fire button on your joystick all simultaneously you can actually skip through all the castle's levels with the function keys!

Tommy Gun

Mutation Software

A big thanks to Adrian Cummings, the man behind Tommy Gun, for providing these very tasty codes for us.
Paradise Island - 442244
Fairground - 867377
Sky Fortress - 835000
Space Mountain - 730098

CyberPunks

Core Design

Yep, it's Adrian "lick my boots" Cummings with another useful cheat! Corrr, thanks Adrian! While playing, try holding down the keys R, G, B and the left mouse button and the fire button on your joystick simultaneously. The screen will flash and pressing F1 to F5 for all the missions, while pressing 1 to 4 on the keyboard selects what deck you want. Pressing A will give you a sentry, while key S gives a party shield and D a robot. Z, X and C gives you different weapons. Finally, a quick poke of the Left shift gives you a smart bomb.

Tiny Troops

Vulcan Software

Paul "Hairy chesty" Carrington of Planet Vulcan kindly gave me an excellent cheat for all the levels to be played or skipped in Tiny Troops. All you have to do is get to the selection screen at the beginning of your game and then click in the top left hand corner of the screen, and now if you type any 2 digit number (ie 09 or 26) you'll be able to play the sixty plus levels no problemo!

Minskies The Abduction

Binary Emotions/Guildhall Leisure

Thanks to all the boys and girls of Binary Emotions (just kidding lads, honestly!) for the following helpful codes for Minskies. At the very first level called Boo Cake, type SPIRAL and you should see the screen flash. This will activate the level skip and you can now play any level on any difficulty setting! Enter the word FOREVER just like before and you will have infinite credits to play with!

F-15 Strike Eagle 2

Guildhall Leisure

If you still fancy yourself as a real Top Gun like Mr. Bray of Guildhall does, then you will have to press CTRL, R and ALT simultaneously then your ammo will be constantly replenished! (Tony! When are we gonna get our mitts on TFX then?)

F117A: Stealth Fighter

Guildhall Leisure

While starting the game, choose to run a strike mission, but this time don't give your aircraft any air to ground missiles. When you get a ground target within range, press 7 and U simultaneously and the target will have been destroyed! Yeahhh!

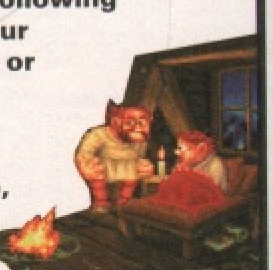
Hillsea Lido

Vulcan Software

Paul "the illogical Vulcan from planet V" returns yet again to share with us this great cheat for the only seaside simulator in existence. When you go to save your game usually using a function keys, press the Help key instead and you'll get 1000 smackers!

You need help pal!

If you need help on any game, or you have some tips you'd like to share with your fellow readers, write to Tips Central at the following address, marking your envelope Adventure or Arcade accordingly:



Tips Central,
CU Amiga Magazine,
37-39 Millharbour,
Isle of Dogs.
London E14 9TZ.

Zak McKracken

I am going mad with frustration, as I can't find the white crystal in Zak McKracken. And when I do find it, how do I use it as there is no one left to teach Zak? Please Help!

Neil Cathcart, Helensburgh

The white crystal is conveniently located – on Mars! Oh dear, not your day is it? The exact location is inside the Crystal Chamber. You will need someone else with Zak as the puzzle cannot be solved on your own. One person presses the button on the small box while the other grabs the crystal. As you need to be pretty quick on the keyboard to carry out this task, I suggest you use the game's function keys option to help you move faster.

You don't need anyone to teach you how to use the crystal, you simply use it along with the other crystals in the final section of the game inside the Earth pyramid.





Eye of The Beholder II

I am stuck on level 2 of the Priest's Temple. I have opened all of the doors apart from one that requires a special copper key. I have searched everywhere for it. Please can you tell me where it is?

E. Winnett, Rochdale.

There are copper keys all over this part of the game. One is to be found by searching a bed, another is dropped by a priest when he is killed, and yet another is found in an alcove which is reached by smashing a black statue and pressing the secret button which is hidden behind it. There are another couple of copper locks on this floor which do require special copper keys, but here I have both good news and bad news for you. The bad news is that there is no key to be found for these locks. Gloom! However the good news is that a thief can pick these locks should you be lucky enough to have one in your party. You will of course also need a set of lockpicks, but I'm sure you'll have no trouble finding some of those.

Dreamweb

I've killed Crane and Sterling, and now have got as far as gaining entrance to the Sartain Industry building using the code number from Eden's cartridge. However, I cannot gain entrance past the computer in the entrance to the building.What am I supposed to do? Please help!

R. Smith, Emsworth



Dreamweb

Well perhaps you are trying to be too clever. I've never met a computer yet that didn't respond to a smack in the mouth! Try using Ryan's gun on it and then see if it still wants to stop you. Computers will only take over the world if we are too stupid to think of smashing up their power supplies.



Simon the Sorcerer (2)

Secret of Monkey Island

I'm badly stuck in this game as I don't know how to get a crew. Can you help me?

Tony Oldham.

The first person you need to recruit to start forming your crew is the prisoner. You'll do that by grabbing lots of mugs from the bar. Use one mug on the barrel of grog then make a run for the jail. As the grog melts the mug you can transfer the liquid to the next empty mug. You can use the nasty grog to melt the lock on the cell door. You can now recruit the Swordmaster into your crew. Next up is Mr Meathook from the house at the top of the island. You'll need to use the rubber chicken on the wire to get there. Talk to Meathook, and then be prepared to tickle a murderous winged devil to solve the test.

Leisure Suit Larry II

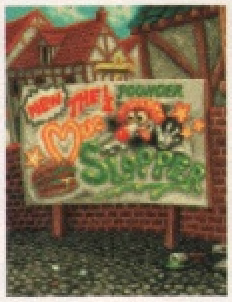
You must help me! I'm only thirteen, but I have had my Amiga for 5 years now and have completed many games in the Quest series such as Police Quest and the Leisure Suit Larry games. Now I'm having problems with Larry II as I can't find the boat. The only screen you can even see any ships on, is the screen with the Scurvy Dog Bar on it.

Mark Cook, Norwich

Look laddie, we are not talking rocket science here, there is no problem to solve, you simply have to walk in the right direction to find the ship. The location is in the lower-right hand section of the map where there is a man standing behind a gate. Go south from the Scurvy Dog to the Barber Shop, then east to the gate. Simply show him your ticket and you're on your way to sun, sea, and something else beginning with 'S' that I'm certainly not going to discuss here.

Flight of the Amazon Queen

I recently got Flight of the Amazon Queen and I have come to a complete standstill. I have just opened the door guarded by the dog and I have: a file, blueprint, baseball bat, journal, knife, comic book, flower, vacuum cleaner, money, Cheese Bitz, dog food and a lighter. What do I do next?



Chee Kiss Lee, Cumbria.

Well I'd stay away from that dog for a start, as you are nowhere near ready to deal with it. In the room where you found the letter you can also find a squeaky toy in the foot locker. From the foyer you can move northwards into the library where there is a phonograph (that's a record player to you). Play a record and this will reveal a secret elevator. Move south from here and then read the letter. It's a "Dear John" letter so who better to give it to than John who is guarding the corridor. Having read the letter, John will be in no state to stop you moving past to find an office where a guy called Henry is waiting.

Simon the Sorcerer

I have been playing Simon the Sorcerer for five weeks and it's very hard to pick up the axe, so will you help me? Also, what do you use to get down the hole on top of the dragon's lair?

Luke Sykes, Hull

Perhaps the reason that it is hard to pick up the axe, is because you aren't supposed to! There is a woodcutter who wants a new axehead, but there is no axe to pick up. What you need to do is use the metal detector in the icy wastes to find a rock which you can take to the blacksmiths and use it on an anvil to discover a fossil. Give the fossil to the palaeontologist and that will make him move to the icy wastes and start digging. Now you'll be able to find some magical ore amongst the dirt which the fossil hunter throws out of the hole in the icy wastes. Take this ore to the blacksmiths anvil to get a new axehead. That's what the woodcutter wants!
As for the hole in the roof of the dragon's lair, well you are going to need the rope and the magnet from the wizard's house, plus the hook from inside the dwarves cave.

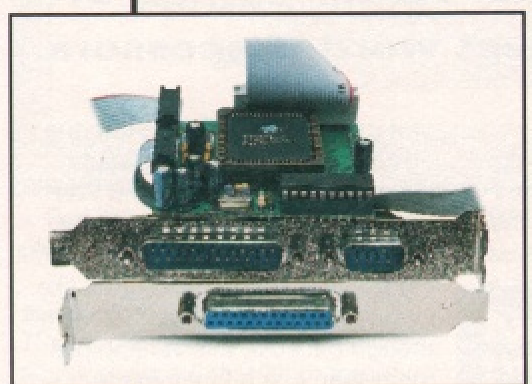
Tech Scene



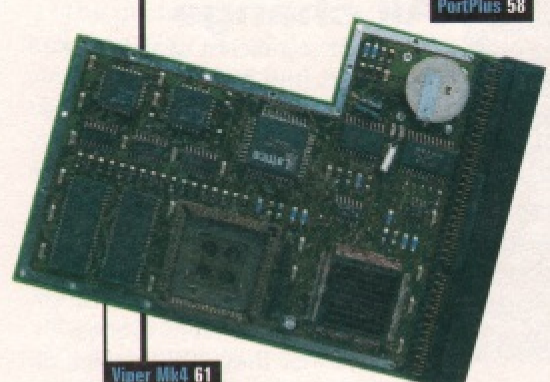
We've got kit and loads of it! This month we take your Amiga over to the 'dark side' with a range of hardware and software to extract usefulness out of IBM PCs



IDE Zip Drive 63



PortPlus 58



Viper Mk4 61



Insert 104 62



CD-ROM Scene 70

Final Writer 97

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

■ Price: £49.99 (upgrade £19.95) ■ Developer: Softwood Inc ■ Supplier: Softwood © 01773 836781

So it's perennial and has been around for years. Perhaps that's what makes Final Writer 97 one of the Amiga's finest word processors.

So far this year, we Amiga enthusiasts have received many pieces of good news and the release of this upgrade is no less joyous. Final Writer 97 contains a number of significant new features including linkable text frames, guides to help you align objects, improved text flow around objects and the ability to move objects a pixel at a time.

Before I launch headlong into a review of these new features and give you a feel for what they let you do, I'd just like to let you know that reviews of earlier versions (and therefore other features) can be found in these back issues: September 1996 (Final Writer 5) and November 1995 (Final Writer 4).

Back to the main plot of this review and Final Writer 97. The first point to make is to state the obvious and mention the slight name change. Gone are version numbers and in comes the year the upgrade has appeared, making the title sound more "PC" like. I won't hold that against Softwood though because this version has more than just a fancy name.

All change

The most significant of the new features is one called Text Frames. Final Writer has for many years always let you add single blocks of text and with the help of some ARexx scripts, let you create fancy titles and so on, but linkable text frames is all new.

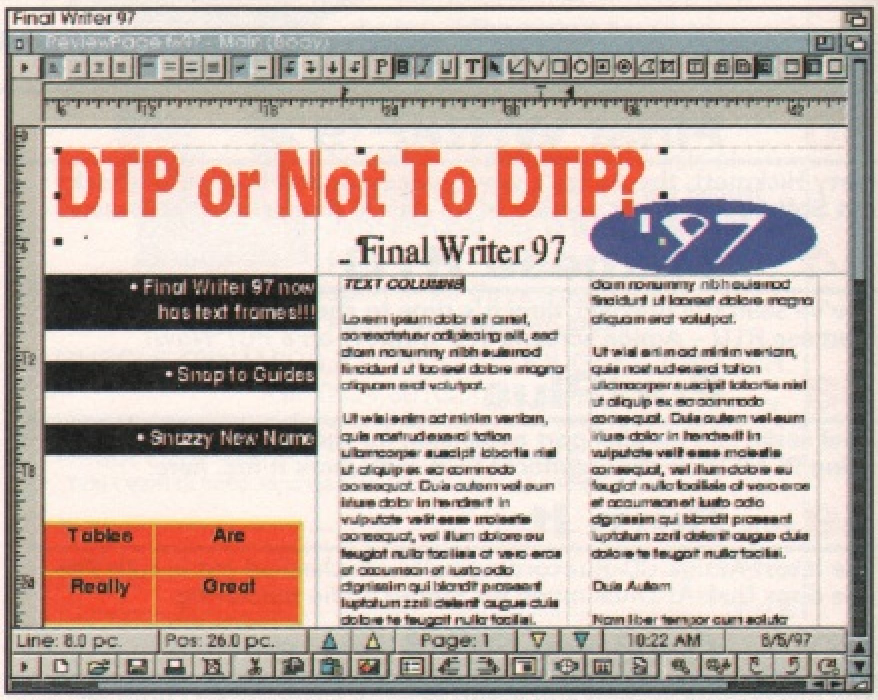
Let's start by looking at a bit of history first. Most word processors, whether they are graphics or text based, work with fixed columns that are created using attributes that you can enter into an appropriate requester, defining the number of columns, their size and so forth. These fixed columns can hold text but cannot be picked up or resized and so on. In previous versions of Final Writer this system was used. Before this version, any text outside the text column had to be placed in Text Blocks or Tables.

This differs greatly to a DTP program where text is typed into linkable text frames and you don't have such a thing as fixed text columns. In Final Writer 97, you have both text frames (like a DTP program, sort of...) and fixed text columns.

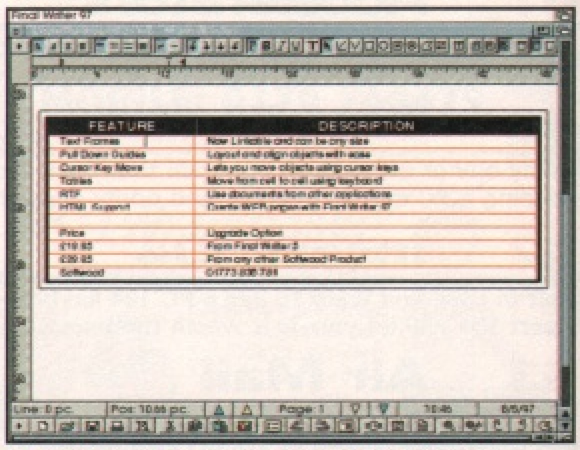
Now this is a good thing but with power comes complexity of use and text frames in Final Writer 97 are not as straight forward to use as they could be. I started off by pasting 600 words into a text column, and these were fixed in this column. I then stamped the text tool down on a blank part of the page expecting to create some text, but found instead the cursor sitting inside the fixed text column.

Once I had entered some text, I was able to move the text block to the blank part of the page I had set aside for the text frame. This is fine and dandy if there is no text in the adjacent text column, but if there is, you'll find yourself typing away in the text column in amongst the text already in there.

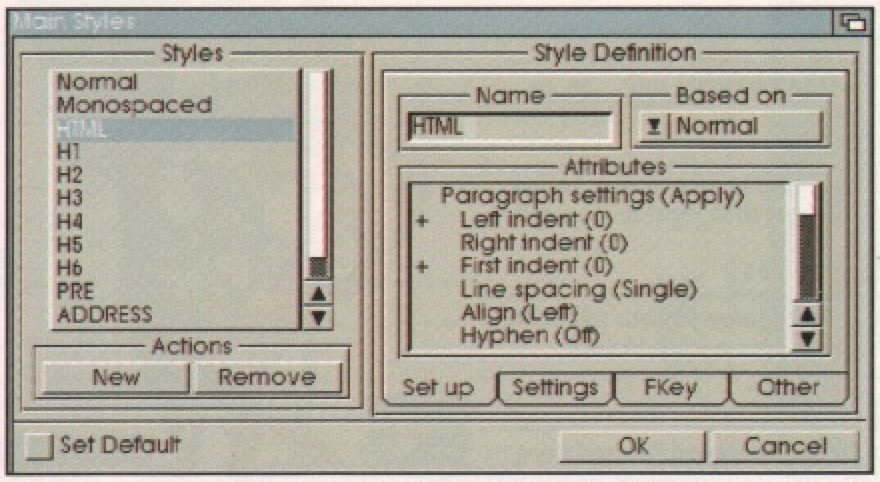
As you can see, this could lead to tricky situations if you have many full pages of text because on each page, you would have to go to either the start or end of the



▲ Final Writer 97 boasts many new features like linkable text frames and pull down guides making it a true document publisher and almost a desktop publishing package.



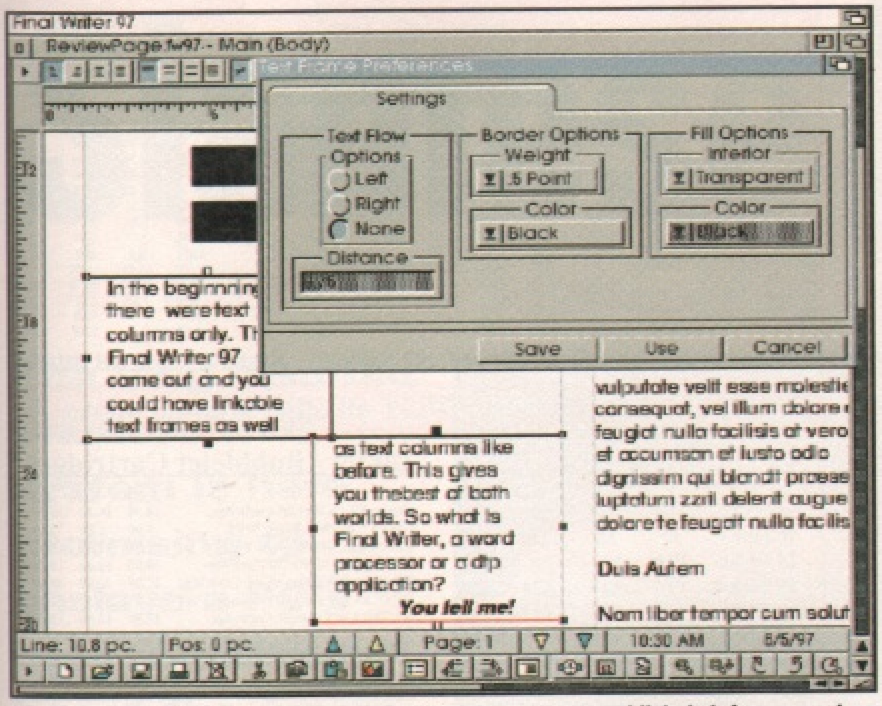
▲ Moving from cell to cell can now be done via the keyboard using modifier/Return key combinations.



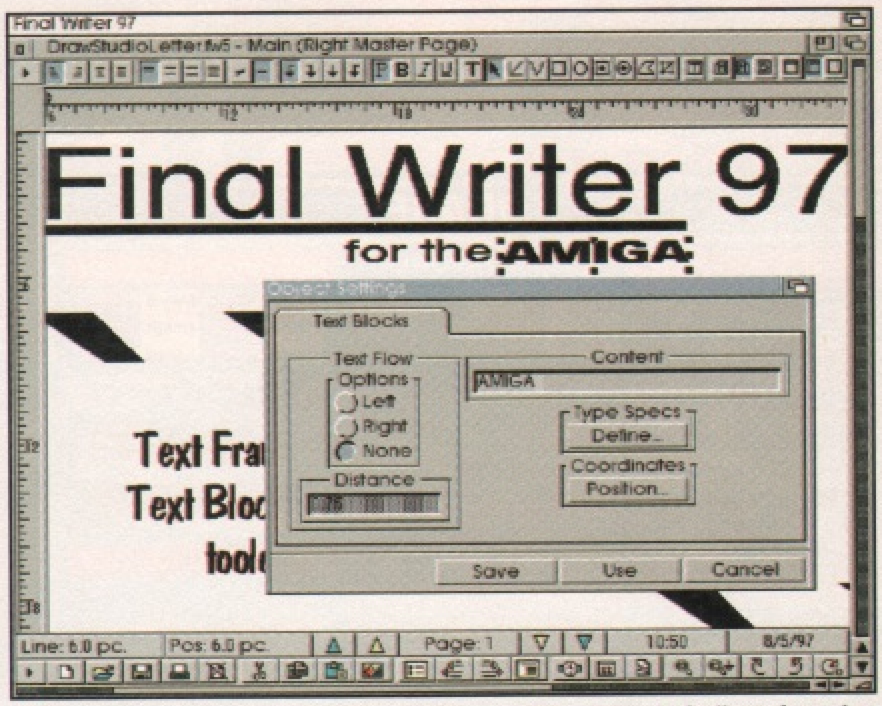
▲ Although not new, we shouldn't forget many of Final Writer's other great features like HTML support for those web freaks out there.

What's missing

After so many years of development, you must wonder what's left to do in Final Writer. Well, there are a few things still missing and most of them involve graphics. Speeding up EPS printing for those insisting on using structured graphics would please many and introducing a picture frame tool so images could be placed onto the page in position and at the size required. The way Final Writer remaps colours in bitmap images as you come back to its screen from another, is still there and could do with fixing. The ability to view pages side by side would be useful now that we have linkable text frames and let's hope in the next version we can rotate the text frames.



▲ Text frames allow you to place text anywhere on your page and link their frames on the same page or across other pages. The text frames can also have fills and borders.



▲ Final Writer still retains many of its earlier features like text blocks for lines of text that can be resized and used for eye catching headings.

page before creating your text frames. One way in which you can work around this is to have a spare text frame sitting on your page ready to be used as the basis for new text frames.

The reason you need to go to the start or end to create a new text frame is because if you stamp the text tool down on the page above or below a fixed text column, you are able to enter your text directly onto the page thereby creating a text frame.

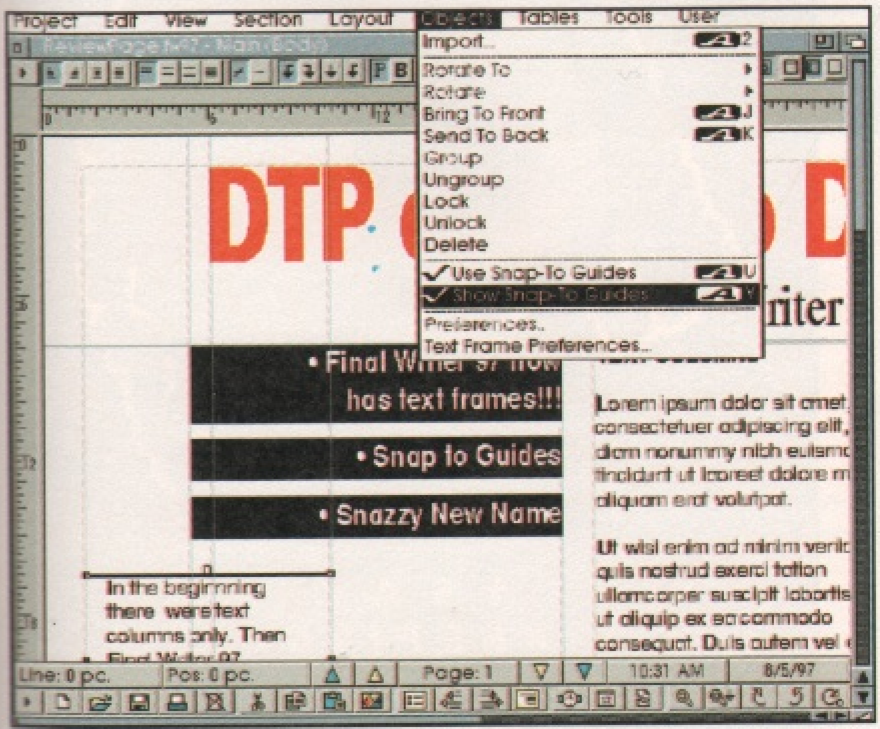
You will get used to it after a while and although Softwood could have used other ways to do this, these other methods may well have had their own short comings. The important point to remember is that thanks to Final Writer 97, you now have complete freedom of the page to have as many text frames, linked or other wise, in which to enter your text, without any of the restrictions of days gone by.

Text frames can also be treated like other objects in most ways. They cannot be rotated, but they can have borders and also solid fills. They can even be transparent and placed over other objects like pictures and so on.

A guiding hand

Text frames may be the major new feature, but one of the most useful for those who are forever lining up objects, are pull down guides. These are implemented the way all guides should be, in that all you do is drag down a guiding line from the rulers and then use that to align objects. They work well, really well and it's a crying shame that all programs don't have these.

The guides can be used to help you align things by eye or, if you prefer, you can turn on Snap to Guides so objects locate with your pre-drawn guides for easy alignment. If that isn't enough, Softwood has also implemented a function allowing you to move selected objects with the cursor keys This type of function was very welcome for me, especially as it isn't normally found in the majority of Amiga programs and it's very well it implemented in Final Writer.



▲ When it comes to lining up elements on your page, pull down guides are a real time saver as well as being simple to use.

Keyboard movements

In version 5 we saw the introduction of Tables and in Final Writer 97, we see a slight improvement. In version 5, you had to use your mouse to go from cell to cell but now you can use the Return key in conjunction with various modifier keys to simply move from cell to cell. Alt-Return for example, takes you to the cell to the right of the cursor while Ctrl-Return takes you down a cell. As I prefer to use the keyboard for moving around documents, this, like the other new functions, is very welcome (although before I start my celebrations, I'll still have to sit down and learn all the new keyboard combinations!)

There haven't been that many changes made to Final Writer, testement to how good it already is, but the text frames function is a major improvement and probably took a while to implement, which is why there aren't loads of new features to look at. In all, the upgrade is definitely worth the asking price. With this latest Final Writer, not only do you have a word processor, you now also have a mini desktop publishing program. In my book, that can't be bad. ■

Larry Hickmott

New low prices

Final Writer, the full package, has had a price drop. It now costs only £49.95 while upgrades are even cheaper. Upgrading from version 5 will set you back £19.95; from version 4 £24.95 and from any other Softwood product £29.95. All prices are subject to a £3 postage charge.

FINAL WRITER 97

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements:
Any Amiga running Workbench 2.04 or higher, hard disk and 3Mb of free memory.

ease of use 92%
Text frames will take getting used to but the program is one of the easiest to use.

performance 93%
Nothing much has changed here with pictures slowing it down but text redraws faster than most people can type.

value for money 95%
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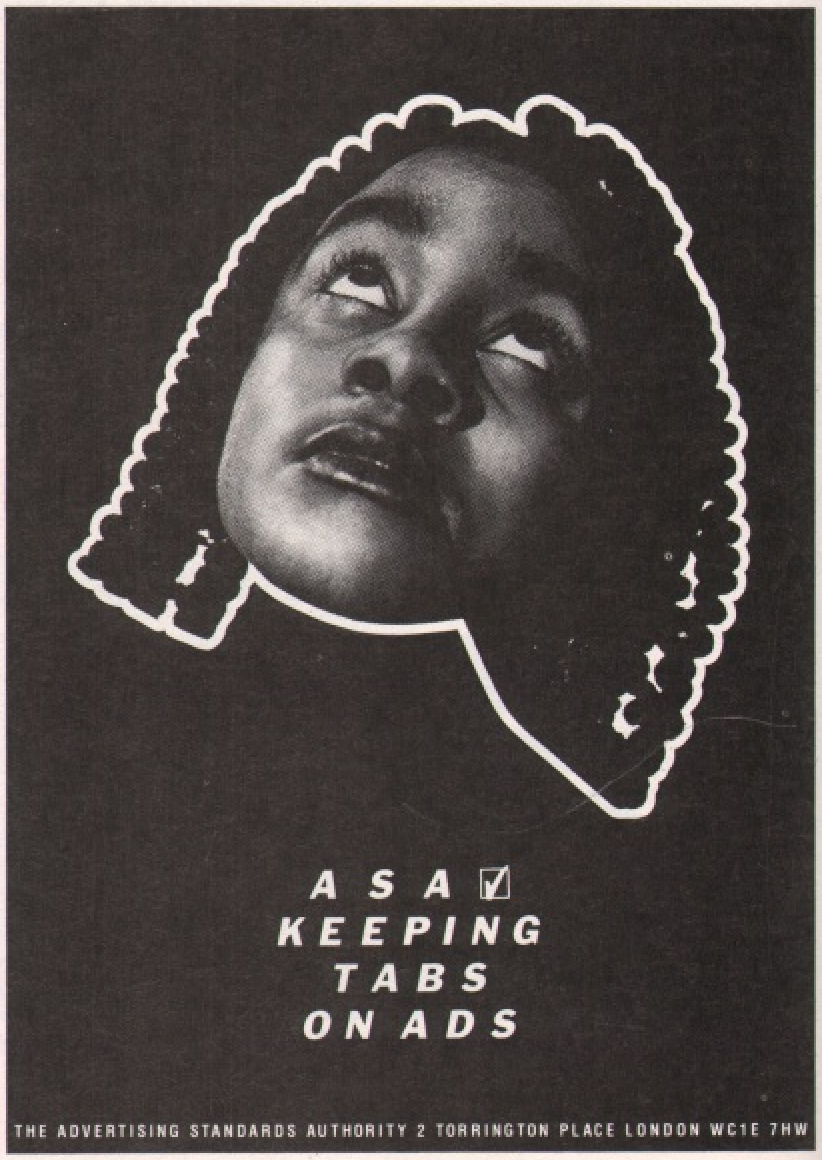
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Siamese 2.0

AMIGA MAGAZINE SUPERSTAR

■ Price: £199 ■ Developer: HiQ ■ Supplier: HiQ © 01525 211327 http://www.siamese.co.uk

The long awaited Siamese RTG system is here, promising to enslave a PC's best features to boost the Amiga. Sounds too good to be true?

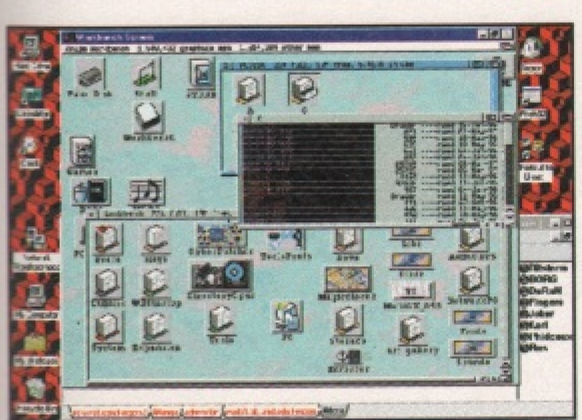


The original Siamese system was a highly innovative and practical connection system between the Amiga and a Windows 95 based PC compatible. Now version 2.0 allows you to view your Amiga screens in a window on a fast PC display and to share files, printers and more.

The old version consisted of a SCSI network for sharing files and a video switcher card, located inside the PC driven by serial. The internal cable to the PC's serial port is re-routed to the video switcher card and a new serial D plug connected to the card as a passthrough and attached to the PC's video output, wedging the video switcher card into the serial link between the PC and Amiga.

Convoluted connections

Phew, so what next? Software is loaded onto the Amiga and PC which enables both machines to switch the video as desired. As you'd expect, the video card has the Amiga and PC's video output plugged into it. A video cable is provided for the Amiga. The single video output is then connected to a monitor, (if we're going to be using Amiga native modes), and we have the software on Amiga and PC.



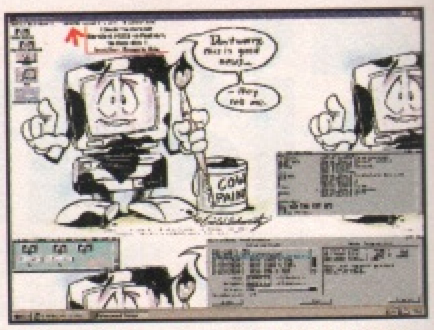
▲ **Here we can see the Workbench screen under RTG and PC DISK, the parallel network from Network PC (page 60)**

With the software running, the two clients can now communicate with each other and the video card. Either machine can now send its keyboard and mouse input to the other. The idea is that you can now use the Amiga's keyboard and mouse or the PC's depending on your preference. Running the Amiga96 client on the Amiga gives a little Windows 95 style task bar. Click on the Windows logo to switch the video and keyboard/mouse input to the PC which has an Amiga style front-to-back icon in its own task bar. Click on this to revert to the Amiga screen with the keyboard/mouse input appropriately being sent to the Amiga.

The system works remarkably well. Only one monitor, one keyboard and one mouse need to be on the table. Yet we have full access to both machines. Of course the next vital component is being able to share files. The original Siamese system introduced a SCSI network. A SCSI cable was connected to the SCSI port on a PC SCSI card, into the Amiga's SCSI chain. A SCSI hard drive could then be accessed by both machines. You just don't get faster file access than a direct SCSI hard drive connection. It does mean, SCSI all round and a spare hard drive though. Oh and CrossDOS doesn't support Windows 95 long filenames so only the alternate 8.3 filenames are available from the Amiga side. This is annoying. For example aproperfilename.jpeg would turn into aprope~1.jpe, arrrggghh.



▲ Even ImageFX is quite happy to work via Siamese RTG, meanwhile we have Netscape on the PC in the background.



▲ Amazingly, we can even boot a FastRAM-less, HD-less A1200 with Siamese!

Faster than Ethernet

The SCSI network is still the fastest PC to Amiga network, faster even that Ethernet. So if the filename problems aren't an issue but speed is, this is the way to go. There are plenty of alternatives though. One of these is the built-in MountPC function of the Siamese system. This mounts the PC drives properly, i.e. PC:C/ is the PC's C: drive. Long filenames are supported properly but since the data goes via the serial cable, access is too slow for anything other than infrequent file sharing.

The performance issue is governed by how fast the serial connection can be driven. The PC will happily do 115200 baud, even higher but Windows 95 seems to have some kind of maximum limit in typical stupid PC fashion. The Amiga can do 115200 if your Amiga is a fast machine, we're talking 68030 material for reliable 115200. Thoughtfully, HiQ have provided a HiSoft Surf Squirrel driver to use the Surf Squirrel's high speed serial port. This will enable faultless 115200 communication. There's a driver for the new HiQ whippet PCMCIA serial adaptor also. A future plan is to exceed 115200 baud by using one of these devices in conjunction with a fast PC serial card and an appropriate serial driver (which bypasses Window 95's silly standard COM: port 115200 limitation).

There is a plan by the company to support the Eyetech PortPlus which also benefits from fast serial times. These third party serial add-ons are all the more important if the Amiga is expected to go online with a modem and so on. However, the interest in high speed serial has more to do with the new RTG than file transfers. We'll cover this later in the review.

Printer sharing

Fortunately the Siamese system doesn't use parallel at all. What about a printer? Well you can plug the printer into the PC and access it from the Amiga. Is there anything the Siamese doesn't connect together? Ahh but if we're thinking about a second parallel network, the PC's parallel port is used. No problem, let's just stick a second dirt cheap IO card into the PC so it's got two parallel ports. Now we can use a parallel file transfer system and a printer, on both machines, via the all-singing, all-dancing Siamese system. For more detail on parallel port file sharing, check out the head-to-head review of the Network PC and Gemini systems on page 60.

So what else does the magical Siamese system do? Oh, little trivial things like sharing the clipboard. Are you crazy? This is stupidly useful! Think about it... if you're in CED on the Amiga, just mark text and Amiga-C to copy to the clipboard. Now, switch to the PC, Microsoft Word perhaps? Paste and whammo! The text is immediately pasted in Word. It's amazing, just amazing. There's also a neat little function to set the Amiga's time from the PC. Handy if you haven't got a real-time clock but then again who hasn't these days...

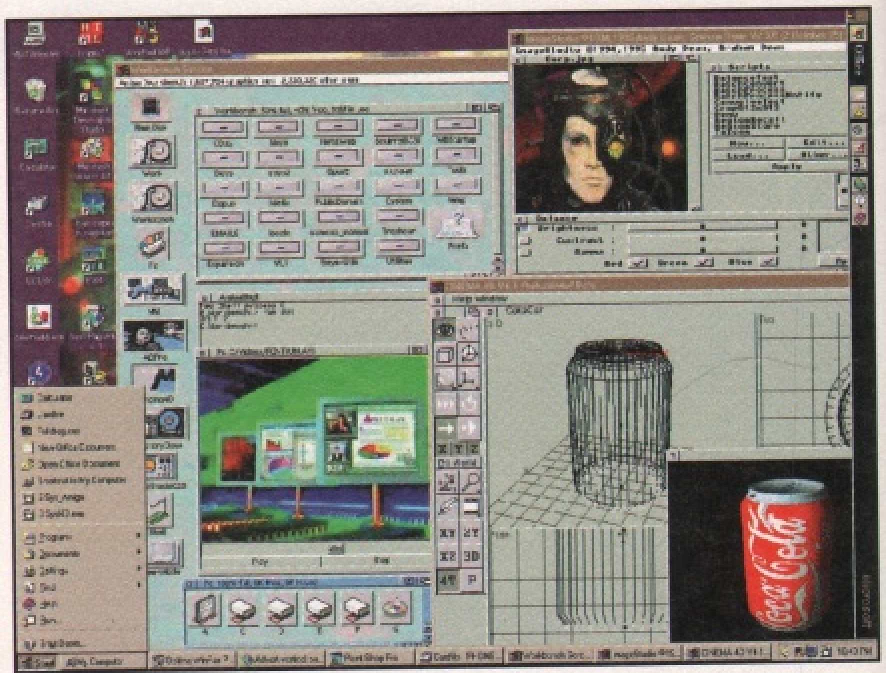
Siamese RTG

Now it's time to look at the RTG system, previewed back in the Dec '96 issue of CU.

So, what is this RTG thing? RTG or ReTargetable Graphics is the act of re-routing graphics from their original destination to another display. For Amigas this means capturing the Amiga's display to send it to a graphics board using software made to do this as the Amiga never did have a real RTG system of its own. CyberGraphX and Picasso96 are the two systems needed – last month's review of Picasso IV gives some idea of the issues concerned.

With the Siamese RTG, things are radically different. The software sets up new screenmodes as you would expect. Selecting a screenmode, causes instructions for drawing each element of the Amiga's display, backgrounds, icons and GUIs etc.,to be sent to the PC. The PC server then converts those instructions into Windows 95's graphic API. And it works! Without seeing it in action, it's difficult to describe how strange it is to see in operation.

A Siamese RTG screenmode is selected and blam, the Amiga screen goes blank. A window appears on the PC and the



▲ Holy cow! On this Hires screen we've got several Amiga screens in windows. even Cinema 4D is quite happy to operate via the RTG system!

The Future:

This isn't the end of the Siamese development. It was good when it began, it's revolutionary now and should improve in future. Paul Nolan continues to work on the RTG system and other key performance enhancing features are in the pipeline. The obvious one is doing away with a serial link and moving the RTG data to parallel. This has proved problematic on the PC but is being worked on now. This should give a fantastic performance boost to the speed of the display. Also in the pipeline is support for an Ethernet link which would limit Siamese RTG more or less to CPU power alone.

Another obvious factor is Internet connection. The ability to network the PC and Amiga via TCP/IP would mean both machine could use Internet applications simultaneously. Netscape on the PC, AmIRC on the Amiga for example. Work progresses in this area also. The Siamese RTG system has very big things ahead of it for the future.

Amiga's display is redrawn onto it. Holy cow! You can even use the PC's mouse and keyboard to use the Amiga screen on the PC within a window on the PC, you can use Amiga programs. Things don't behave exactly as they do on the Amiga but the author, Paul Nolan, is working on improvements all the time. The saviour here is that if the switcher card is in place and so on, it's possible to swap to the real Amiga screen if an application proves dodgy under RTG.

Screens only appear on the PC if that particular application has specifically opened a Siamese RTG screen. This can be done on Workbench via the screenmode preferences to move Workbench to the PC. Workbench applications naturally appear in the Workbench window on the PC and screen windows can be easily iconified to the Windows task bar. If we've opened multiple Siamese RTG screens, as the Amiga is quite capable of doing, then we get multiple windows on the PC, each neatly named with the title of the screen on the Amiga.

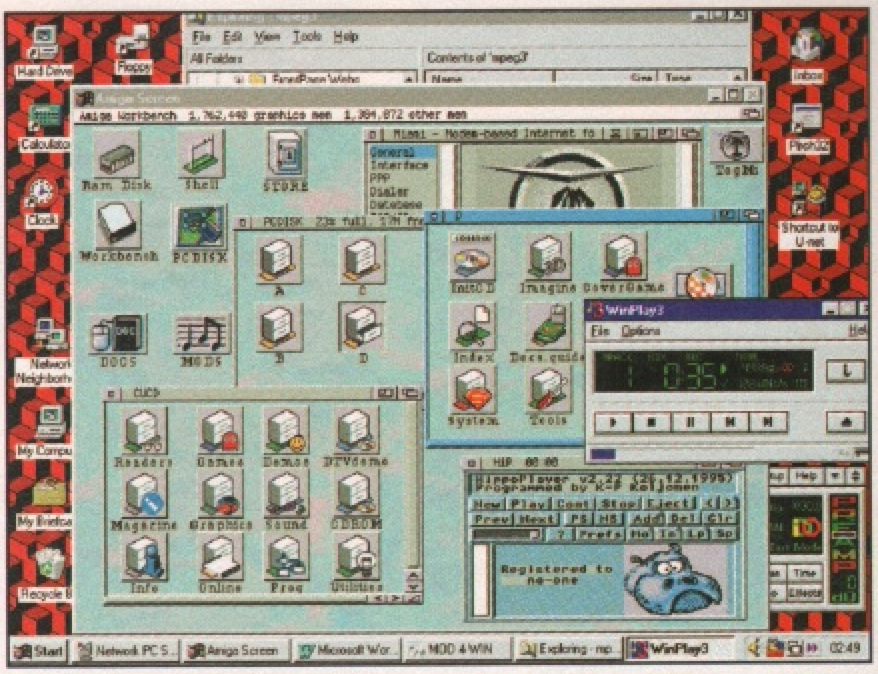
So one application, say a paint package which might be dodgy under the RTG, can be run on the real Amiga display. When activating this screen, wham – the video card switches to Amiga video. Well behaved applications like standard Gadtools, ClassAct even MUI, can be run on Workbench or, if they allow, sent to a fresh RTG public screen. For example, MUI has public screen management built-in. Define a Siamese RTG screen in the PSI screen manager and any MUI application can be quickly sent to the new public screen to appear on the PC video.

Flexible system

The flexibility of this system is amazing. You can run all of your Amiga applications and individually decide if they are better on RTG. How do they appear on the RTG system? It's a little odd as I said before, firstly the system is blindingly quick at moving things around since this is handled on the PC locally and PC graphics cards are still sadly well beyond the current level of Amiga graphics cards. You've seen solid window dragging before but not like this. A basic PCI 2Mb S3 Stealth video card on a P90 moves windows silky smooth. Strangely icons do not appear to drag, disappearing and just appearing where they're dragged to. Paul Nolan tells us that there's no easy workaround to this yet, though he's still working on it.

The RTG system does slow down if loading actual bitmaps. Normally too quick to see, GUIs are constructed by a variety of techniques, from drawing lines, circles and filling, to transfers of bitmap images. The instructions for drawing lines, painting and so on are only a few bytes so even via slow serial they take no appreciable time. Since the Windows graphic API is used, a specific video card driver on the PC will support the hardware acceleration. i.e. hardware for drawing lines, painting, blitting and so on. In the end these actions are much faster under Siamese RTG than any Amiga card. Really it's true...

Since the bitmap graphics are often integral parts of GUIs, this slows things down. Even fonts have to be transferred as bitmaps and all this data uses the dead slow serial link. When Workbench opens a window, for example, you see the window appear instantly, the icon backgrounds appear instantly but the icon pictures appear slowly. Naturally the faster the serial rate, the better the response. The first PC I tried would only seem to work at 38400 baud, though another ran fine at 115200. A possible cause could have been a later version of Windows 95 on the second machine.

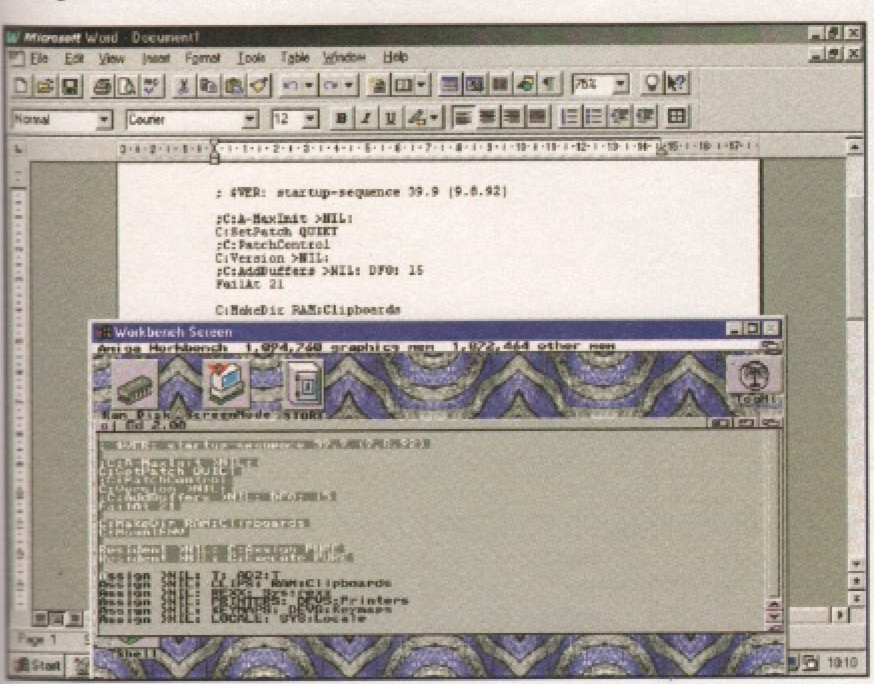


▲ **Kicking butt with the Siamese RTG! You can see us accessing a CUCD via a parallel network, much faster than the otherwise adequate MountPC aspect of the Siamese system.**

Conclusion

If you've got a PC and an Amiga, or are contemplating crossing onto the dark side and buying a PC, there's no choice. This is your destiny. The Siamese system is so damn good, so flexible, so powerful and so thigh slappingly useful you can not be without it, especially given the absurdly low cost for what's on offer. While it may be a little tricky to get working, you could continue to use the outrageously slow, low resolution AGA display, clutter your desk with computers, keyboards and monitors and swap data with 720K floppy disks. Be serious! You need Siamese RTG now! HiQ's number is 01525-211327, so stop reading the review, phone them and buy it! ■

Mat Bettinson



▲ **The RTG and clipboard sharing aspects are demonstrated here. I've clipped text from a Shell on the Amiga into Microsoft Word on the PC.**

Siamese 2.0 RTG

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements: KS 3.0 and above, a Windows 95/NT PC and a free serial port

ease of use..................89%
Somewhat fiddly hardware wise, software installation straightforward.

performance..................98%
Incredibly useful, flexible and powerful. Fantastic.

value for money.............95%
Buy it, buy it, buy it... before someone realises how underpriced it is and puts the cost up.

OVERALL
Got a PC? Get Siamese 2.0 RTG now. **95%**

Harwoods... always the Fastest Amiga Boards and NOW PowerPC Technology for Amigas too!



CYBER BLIZZARD SPEED

POWER PC TECHNOLOGY, POWER PC SPEED and POWER PC PERFORMANCE FOR YOUR AMIGA A1200, A1500, A2000, A3000 or A4000 from Harwoods

NEW...

POWER UP

AMIGA™ GOES POWERPC™

POWER UP YOUR AMIGA...

*A further dimension is being added to Amigas with our new PowerPC based **BLIZZARD POWER BOARDS** for A1200, A1200 based Tower Systems and A1500/2000 systems along with the new **CYBERSTORM PPC** for A3000/4000 systems. You'll now be able to benefit from performance many times beyond the speed of the fastest 680x0 based boards.*

Designed as upgrades for existing systems, **Power Boards** incorporate innovative dual processor technology where a fast PowerPC RISC processor is combined with a 68k CPU, dynamically sharing memory and system busses.

While the original AmigaOS 3.x continues to run on the 68K CPU, supporting existing applications to provide backward compatibility, the PowerPC CPU is backed by comprehensive PPC Libraries which provide the functionality to integrate PowerPC into an Amiga multitasking environment.

Software developers can easily optimise their programs, step by step, porting single tasks to PowerPC code, which then run in parallel with 68k tasks. Leading Amiga software vendors are preparing ported or optimised versions of their software packages already. It is anticipated that a large quantity of software products supporting the PowerPC will be available soon.

Power Boards will be delivered with a comprehensive suite of utilities, including the PPC library, as well as tools for creative users. Among them is a Public Domain GNU C compiler for PowerPC (including sourcecode), many demo programs and utilities with sourcecode. In addition to this software, free developer support is available via FTP site.

Last but not least, a PowerPC optimised version of CyberGraphX V3 with RISC optimised CyberGL/3D plus MPEG functions and libraries is included (along with a special GGX driver to support the AGA chipset) with full and comprehensive documentation.

	Blizzard 603e PowerBoard	Blizzard 603e+ PowerBoard	Blizzard 2604 PowerBoard	Cyberstorm PPC
PowerPC CPU Clock Speed	603e 175MHz	603e 200MHz	604e 150-200MHz	604e 150-200MHz
Companion CPU	68030 50MHz	68040/68060 25-50MHz	68040/68060 25-50MHz	68040/68060 25-50MHz
Est. PPC Performance MIPS SpecFP95	@ 175MHz Approx. 250* Approx. 3.1	@ 200MHz Approx. 280* Approx. 3.5	@ 200MHz Approx. 350* Approx. 7.1	@ 200MHz Approx. 350* Approx. 7.1
Memory Option SIMM Sockets	Max. 64Mb 1	Max. 64Mb 1	Max. 128Mb 4	Max. 128Mb 4
SCSI On Board	Fast SCSI-II	Fast SCSI-II	Ultra Wide	Ultra Wide
Amiga Compatibility	A1200(+T)	A1200(+T)	A1500/2000	A3000/4000(+T)
Est. Availability	Summer '97	Summer '97	Summer '97	Summer '97
from Prices	from £280*	from £329*	from £490*	from £460*

Blizzard 603e Power Board - A1200(+T)

The new Blizzard 603e Power Board is an inexpensive Power Up Accelerator for A1200 system owners who already have a board with a socketed full 50MHz 68030+MMU processor (these CPUs have a gold finish to the top surface) eg.50MHz Blizzard 1230-II, III, IV or similar. Featuring a 175MHz PowerPC 603e RISC CPU, the board has a socket for the 50MHz 68030, expansion capabilities of up to 64Mb high speed memory and built in SCSI-II controller.

Imagine the performance from your A1200 with this low cost board!

Blizzard 603e+ Power Board - A1200(+T)

The Blizzard 603e+ Power Board is the highest spec Power Up Accelerator for A1200 systems. Featuring a 200MHz PowerPC 603e RISC CPU, the board has a socket for a companion 68040 or 68060 CPU, expansion capabilities up to 64Mb of high speed memory and built in SCSI-II controller. This board is ideally suited to those owners who already use an accelerator with either a 68040 or 68060 CPU (ie. Blizzard 1240T/ERC or Blizzard 1260 owners or their equivalents)

If you want the BEST from YOUR Amiga A1200 - this is it!

Blizzard 2604 Power Board - A1500/2000

If you own either an A1500 or A2000 you can now take advantage of PowerPC technology with this 604e CPU RISC based board which has a socket for a companion 68040 or 68060 CPU, expansion capabilities up to 128Mb of high speed 64-Bit memory, built in Ultra-Wide SCSI controller and a high performance expansion slot for expansions such as the CyberVision PPC. This board is ideal for owners of accelerators with 68040 or 68060 processors such as the Blizzard 2040 or Blizzard 2060 owners (or their equivalents).

Want the BEST from YOUR Amiga A1500/2000? - Look no further!

CyberStorm PPC Board - A3000/4000(+T)

CyberStorm PPC is the ultimate accelerator for Amiga 3000[T], 4000[T] and systems with compatible CPU slots, offer blistering 604e performance - more than 10 times faster than any 68k based accelerator on sale today! Available with clock speeds of 150, 180 and 200MHz, the companion socket for the 68k processor accepts either a 68040 or 68060 CPU. The board provides 64-bit wide extremely fast memory expansion using pairs of standard SIMMs, dynamically shared by the two CPUs. Additionally, CyberStorm PPC comes with a DMA driven Wide ULTRA SCSI controller on board offering transfer rates of up to 40Mb/sec for even the most demanding of professional applications. A 32Bit high speed expansion connector, with DMA access to the main memory, is also provided for later upgradeability.

The 200MHz version of the CyberStorm PPC provides performance of more than 350 MIPS or approximately 8.1 SPECint95 and 7.1 SPECfp95*... breathtaking speed that goes far beyond that offered by most PC systems. In the second half of the year, an advanced graphics board will become available for the CyberStorm PPC expansion slot, providing a subset of the innovative CAIPIRINHA custom chip. By having a stand alone version of the DLRP (Display List Risc Processor), this board will offer superior display capabilities through higher VRAM-based resolutions, pixel depths and speeds, as well as the potential to begin developing software supporting the functionality of the forthcoming A\BOX system.

PRICING AND AVAILABILITY:

Options with or without 68k CPUs will allow users to fit the CPU from their existing accelerator. Special prices will be available to both BLIZZARD and CYBERSTORM board users. Delivery of Power Boards is scheduled for Summer 1997 following finalisation of CE approvals. Call now for full details.

**Quoted performance figures are estimations based on specifications from Motorola/IBM and are relevant to the PowerPC processor only.*

**Registered Blizzard and CyberStorm users' upgrade prices assuming use of processor from users' own board. Owners of other makes of board or those who don't already have an appropriate CPU - please call for prices.*

STILL THE FASTEST, NOW LOWER PRICED, NO ONE ELSE COMES CLOSE!

CYBERVISION 64/3D

64-Bit ENGINE A2000/3000/4000 (T Series) 3D VERSION 24-Bit COLOUR ACCELERATED GRAPHICS CARD.

For all Zorro-3 and Tower System A1200s with Zorro II backplanes.

LOWER PRICES!

The core of this great board is the VIRGE GRAPHICS CHIP from S3. With 3D capabilities, it's able to process complex 3D functions in hardware (eg. shaded & textured surfaces) with Trilinear Filtering and Shading/Fogging for super realistic Real Time 3D Rendering. When used with CyberGraphX 3D library, Cybervision 64/3D can even offer a broad range of 3D facilities for any software developer.

CyberVISION 64/3D... 4Mb Version — £169.95

MPEG Decoder - added to the Feature Connector to provide real time MPEG audio and video decoding at full size custom screens or, in Workbench windows (HQ display using 16/24Bit modes from CyberGraphX Workbench). Stereo audio output is provided via the supplied dedicated line output jack. Upgrade to a Cybervision 64/3D and MPEG bundle (from previous Cybervision 64) for a special low price! — £149.95

Monitor Switcher - with integrated scan line doubler. Designed to fit into the Amiga slot, this gives full automatic switchover from the standard Amiga signal to Cybervision 64/3D's output. Both cards may be fitted inside A3000/4000 models leaving three Zorro-III slots free. — £79.95

CYBERSTORM II

CAN BE EXPANDED TO A FULL 68060

AMIGA 68040ERC AND 68060 ACCELERATORS

You can choose between the 68040/40ERC Cyberstorm II or the ultra powerful 68060 version. When you fit a Cyberstorm II 68060 Accelerator to YOUR A3000, A3000T, A4000 or A4000T you can for example, render a graphic with Imagine 2.0 software in just 2.4 minutes! Compare that with 10.34 minutes on a standard A4000 '040/25! With no jumpers, both Cyberstorm II models are fully plug and play and, A4000 users even have the option of a SCSI-2 Module if they wish (A3000s already have SCSI built in).

- Up to 128Mb of standard SIMMs can be installed and you can even transfer the 72Pin SIMMs from your Amiga A4000 straight onto your new Cyberstorm.
- Optional SCSI-2 Module
- If your budget currently only covers the cost of Cyberstorm II 68040ERC, you can always upgrade later to the full 68060 processor for the extra power!

LOWER PRICES!

Cyberstorm II 68040/40 40MHz 68040ERC - 0Mb, Expandable to 128Mb — £299.95
Cyberstorm II 68060/50 50MHz 68060 - 0Mb, Expandable to 128Mb — £449.95
Cyberstorm II SCSI-2 Module — £79.95
Cyberstorm II SIMM RAM Expansions (Please call for a range of SIMM prices) — £Call

1240T/ERC TURBO ACCELERATOR MEMORY BOARD

A1200T* TURBO ACCELERATOR and MMU/FPU for *TOWER SYSTEMS
40MHz 68040 - 0Mb Standard, expandable to 128/256Mb
30MIPS with 60 Nanosecond SIMM fitted.

CAN BE EXPANDED TO A FULL 68060

A super LOW COST A1200 Turbo Accelerator Board, ideal for housing on any *Tower System A1200 main board (mechanical dimensions, high power consumption and heat emission require an active cooling cap, we therefore do NOT recommend fitting to standard A1200s without the appropriate modifications etc.). The "ERC" Processors used on these boards are recycled and vigorously tested 68040 CPUs operating at 40MHz with MMU/FPU - an excellent guaranteed and competitively priced alternative. Available options such as the SCSI-IV Kit and RAM are shared with the Blizzard 1230-IV and 1260.

LOWER PRICE!

Blizzard 1240T/ERC Turbo 40MHz 68040 and MMU/FPU, 0Mb 32Bit Fast RAM, exp. to 128/256Mb — £199.95

2040ERC TURBO ACCELERATOR MEMORY BOARD

A1500/2000 TURBO ACCELERATOR and MMU/FPU
40MHz 68040 - 0Mb Standard, expandable to 128Mb
30MIPS with 60 Nanosecond SIMM fitted.

The Blizzard 2040ERC is a super LOW COST board which offers A1500/2000 owners the opportunity to upgrade to the same performance as the Blizzard 1240T/ERC Board. Users will then be able to enjoy full A4000/040 power as well as take advantage of the built in SCSI-2 interface. The "ERC" Processors used on these boards are recycled and vigorously tested 68040 CPUs operating at 40MHz with MMU/FPU - excellent guaranteed competitively priced alternative.

CAN BE EXPANDED TO A FULL 68060

Blizzard 2040ERC Turbo
40MHz 68040 and MMU/FPU, 0Mb 32Bit Fast RAM, exp. to 128Mb — £299.95

LOWER PRICE!

1260 TURBO ACCELERATOR MEMORY BOARD

EASY TRAPDOOR INSTALLATION... No modification necessary. Reliable low heat output.

A1200 TURBO ACCELERATOR and MMU/FPU
50MHz 68060 - 0Mb Standard, expandable to 64/192Mb
38.71MIPS with single sided 60/70 Nanosecond SIMM fitted.

Offers Amiga A1200 owners FULL 68060 POWER with a board that simply plugs into the trapdoor slot. Your A1200 will then operate at TWICE or even THREE TIMES THE SPEED of an '040 based upgrade and up to FIVE TIMES THE SPEED of a standard A4000! Available options such as the SCSI-IV Kit and RAM are shared with the Blizzard 1230-IV and 1260.

Blizzard 1260 Turbo 50MHz 68060 and MMU/FPU, 0Mb 32Bit Fast RAM, exp. to 64/192Mb — £349.95

LOWER PRICE!

2060 TURBO ACCELERATOR MEMORY BOARD

A1500/2000 TURBO ACCELERATOR and MMU/FPU
50MHz 68060 - 0Mb Standard, expandable to 128Mb
38.71MIPS with 60/70 Nanosecond SIMM fitted.

Offers Amiga A1500/2000 owners the same specification as the remarkable Blizzard 1260 Turbo (A1500/2000s will operate at up to FIVE TIMES THE SPEED of a standard A4000) with FULL 68060 POWER and also includes built in SCSI-2 interface!

Blizzard 2060 Turbo
50MHz 68060 and MMU/FPU with SCSI-2, 0Mb 32Bit Fast RAM, exp to 128Mb — £499.95

LOWER PRICE!

1230-IV TURBO ACCELERATOR MEMORY BOARD

EASY TRAPDOOR INSTALLATION... No modification necessary. Reliable low heat output.

A1200 TURBO ACCELERATOR and MMU
50MHz 68030 - 0Mb Standard, expandable to 128/256Mb
9.91MIPS with 60 Nanosecond SIMM fitted.

The highest performing 68030 Accelerator available for your A1200. With its 50MHz 68030 and MMU, the 1230-IV offers BETTER PERFORMANCE at a LOWER PRICE. With a SysInfo rating of 9.91 (using a 60 n/s SIMM) you can see the 1230-IV is very fast... a performance gain of up to 500% is achieved! Via its Fast Expansion Bus, an optional SCSI-2 Controller module can easily be fitted. An industry standard SIMM socket provides for up to 128Mb of auto-configuring 32Bit Fast RAM (up to 256Mb with the SCSI-2 option using its extra SIMM socket).

LOWER PRICES!

Blizzard 1230-IV Turbo 50MHz 68030 and MMU, 0Mb 32Bit Fast RAM, exp. to 128/256Mb — £99.95
Fast 60 Nanosecond SIMM RAM Expansions - 32Bit, 72Pin — £Call
Motorola Maths Co-Processor - 68882 PGA type FPU, 50MHz — £49.95

MOTOROLA MOTIVATED

Blizzard and Cyberstorm products use MOTOROLA 68060 and PowerPC series processors. They run **WITHIN** the electrical timing specification laid down by Motorola to prevent any possible overheating/reliability problems. So, when you pay for a 50MHz CPU for example, that's exactly what you get... not a 40, 33 or even a 25MHz CPU "clocked" to 50MHz! Look out for the **MOTOROLA MOTIVATED** logo - your guarantee of our commitment to quality and reliability - **BEWARE** of "clocked" CPUs! T/ERC and ERC processors used on selected boards are recycled and vigorously tested 68040 CPUs operating at 40MHz - an excellent guaranteed and competitively priced alternative.

BLIZZARD SCSI-IV KIT

SCSI-2 MODULE for 1230-IV, 1240T/ERC & 1260, & ADDITIONAL 128Mb SIMM SOCKET
(Fast SCSI-2 DMA Controller - upto 10Mb/s transfer rates with additional SIMM socket/extra RAM)

Blizzard SCSI-IV Kit — £79.95

What the Magazines think...

Blizzard products have consistently achieved the highest magazine accolades and awards!

Amiga Shopper *"...1260 is destined to become the ultimate object of desire for A1200 owners."* - **91% STAR BUY Award**
Amiga Computing *"...If you want the fastest Amiga in the World, get this board."* - **92% BLUE CHIP Rating**
Amiga Format *"...Ride on the fastest A1200 in the World..."* - **95% GOLD Rating**

GOLD · AMS · AMIGA SUPERSTAR · Star Buy · BLUE CHIP AWARD · TOP RATED

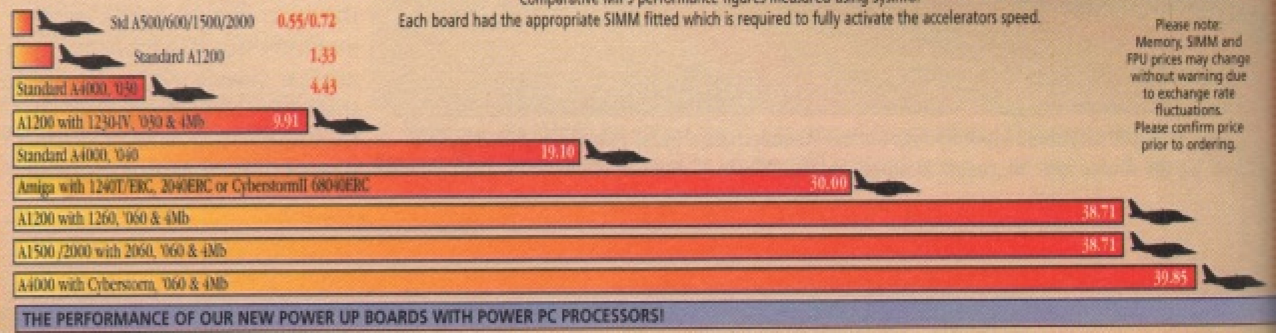
OUR RANGE HAS WON MORE AWARDS THAN ANY OTHER

1230-IV, 1240T/ERC and 1260 FEATURES

- May be disabled with simple keystroke on boot up - for full games compatibility, even badly programmed/older software
- Battery backed self re-charge Real Time Clock
- High performance expansion with full 32Bit wide DMA
- Easy trapdoor installation - no modifications required (1240T/ERC fits in Tower)
- 1230-IV features PGA FPU socket allowing optional 50MHz 68882 FPU

JUST COMPARE THE PERFORMANCE FIGURES FOR YOURSELF!

Comparative MIPS performance figures measured using SysInfo.
Each board had the appropriate SIMM fitted which is required to fully activate the accelerators speed.

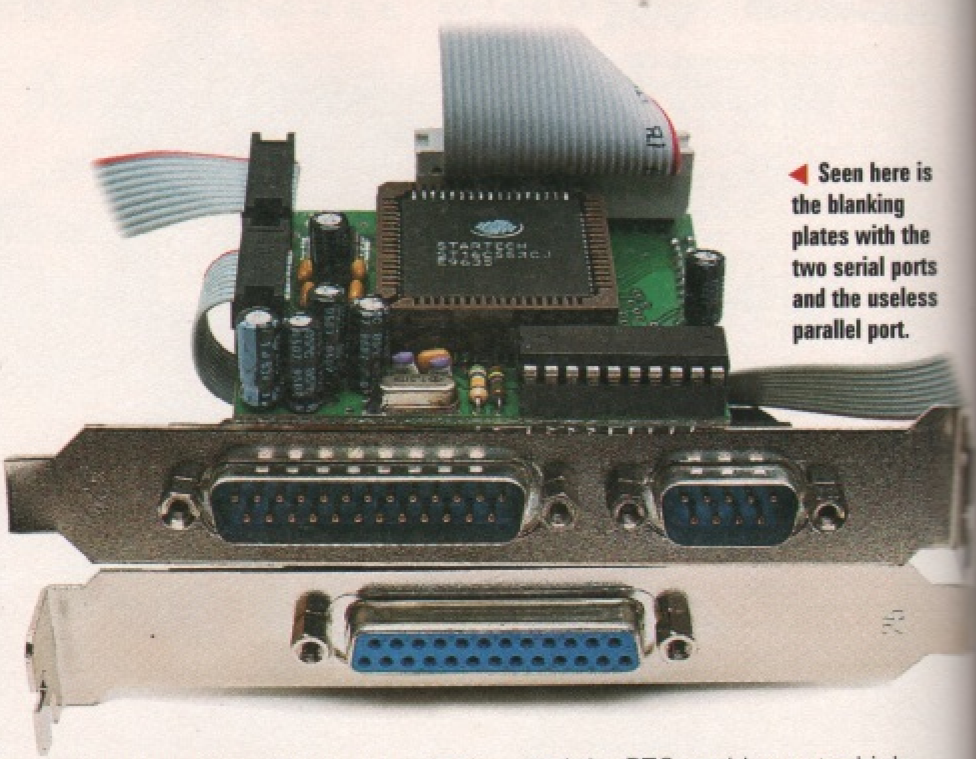


Please note: Memory, SIMM and FPU prices may change without warning due to exchange rate fluctuations. Please confirm price prior to ordering.

PortPlus

■ Price: £99 ■ Developer: VMC
■ Supplier: Eyetech © 01632 713185

The PortPlus promises to add two serial and one parallel port to the A1200 without using the PCMCIA or the trapdoor. How? Read on.



◀ Seen here is the blanking plates with the two serial ports and the useless parallel port.

As you know, the Amiga has a built in serial port which was created before even 9600 baud modems were on the market. It was remarkably powerful at the time but today's serial requirements (such as those of fast modems) have bettered the capabilities of the Amiga's 8520 UARTs.

Multi benefits

It's not just modems that benefit greatly from high speed serial. Pronet, for example, has a serial driver that will use any specified serial device. So will the various serial SANA-II drivers for TCP/IP Internet networking, perhaps to a PC or the like, so there are many advantages to serial expansion.

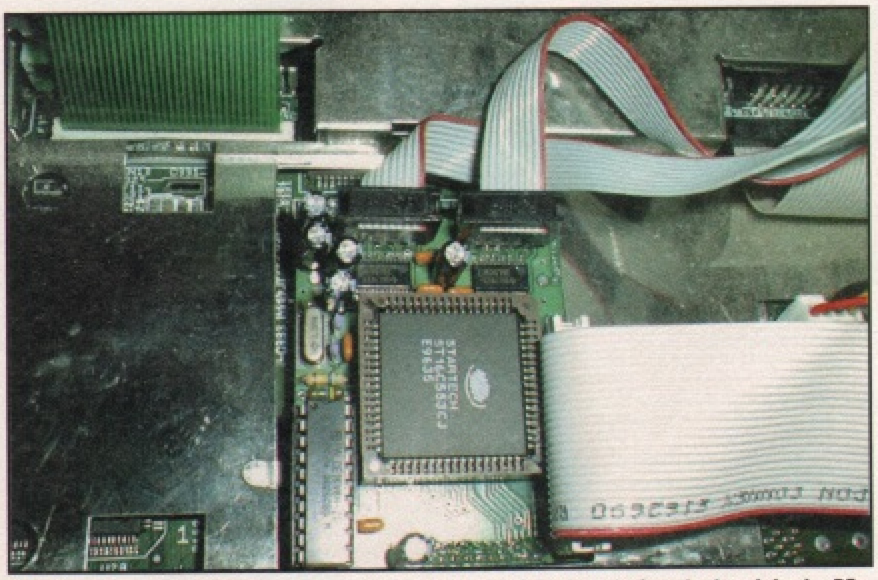
The PortPlus is Eyetech's rebadge of the German VMC HyperCOM 3, though I can't see what's wrong with the HyperCOM name. It provides two high speed serial ports each with 16 bytes of FIFO buffer and an additional parallel port. More about that later. The most innovative aspect of the PortPlus is where it fits. A1200s have an under-used expansion port that not many Amiga users will know about. It's the clock connector near the floppy drive. To get at it, you remove a section of the RF shielding but there's no need to get out the metal sheers, as this particular part of the shield has been made to be easily removable. All you need to do is to bend up the metal lugs and pop it right out. Bending the lugs back down flush, you now have an exposed section of the motherboard with a small header which was designed for a real time clock but can handle lots more. It turns out there are quite enough signals here to use it as a fully fledged expansion port.

Confused? See the photograph below to get an idea of how it all links up.

Tiny PCB

The PortPlus PCB is tiny and it fits the hole perfectly, sliding onto the header. It's probably one of the neatest expansions I've seen that wasn't in the trapdoor. Plugged into it are two standard PC slot blanking plates. The first has both a 25 pin and a 9 pin serial connector, covering both bases nicely. The other has a 25 pin parallel port. Obviously designed for a tower case, these could be attached to one in seconds for perfect rear panel mounting. For normal A1200s, tough cookies. You're going to have to trail the wires out of the case and deal with ugly sockets on wires hanging around. Not for the neurotically tidy, but still practical.

Software is on a single disk. By way of scandalous economy, the disk contains the drivers for the full range of HyperCOM products, none of which we've seen before but are alleged to include a Zorro unit. The installer is in German but we muddled through. It turns out that all it was going to do was copy hyperCOM3.device to devs:, so an English translation shouldn't have been too much to ask for.



▲ This shows the PortPlus dropped into the hole that's revealed after the hatch in the RF shield is removed. It's designed to perfectly fit the hole and plug onto the clock connector.

No parallel?

Did you notice the lack of a parallel driver? We did. There isn't one. There isn't one in the public domain either. There isn't one on the Aminet, on the web and Eyetech don't have one – certainly not a useful networking driver for it. £100 buys you a 'Port' plus that is actually a 'Serial' plus because no-one bothered to write/supply or otherwise ship a parallel driver. This really is a poor show. It's times like we wonder what some vendors think it's possible to get away with. It's just not on!

The serial ports worked very nicely indeed though: very fast, very low CPU usage. It worked first time with Miami and I got online with the PortPlus in minutes. Everything else I tried worked nicely too. All we need is a Siamese driver for the PortPlus and the RTG could run at a high serial rate (the Siamese author is already working on this). As for serial, the PortPlus does exactly what it says on the tin, with the 16C553 chip performing identically to the 16552 on my GVP IO expander in our office A4000T. This is a plug 'n' go card in this respect – rarely is an Amiga add-on this easy to get running.

DIY driver

So... the PortPlus is £100 worth of two high speed serial ports and a useless parallel port, making it not very good value for money – even if the serial ports are good. Sysops out there will be interested allowing them to run a multi-line BBS, but the rest of us might as well settle for a HiSoft Whippet or the PortPlus Jnr, both of which cost half as much and will feature in next month's CU Amiga. If you happen to want two ports or fancy having a go at writing a parallel driver yourself, the PortPlus may be for you. ■

Mat Bettinson

PORT PLUS

A500 | A500+ | A600 | **A1200** | A1500 | A2000 | A3000 | A4000

system requirements:
Amiga 1200 with a clock present.

ease of use 88%
The installation is as easy as it is to get running.

performance 70%
Serial is great, however without software, the parallel is quite redundant.

value for money 58%
Know what a 16C553 costs? Less than a £100.

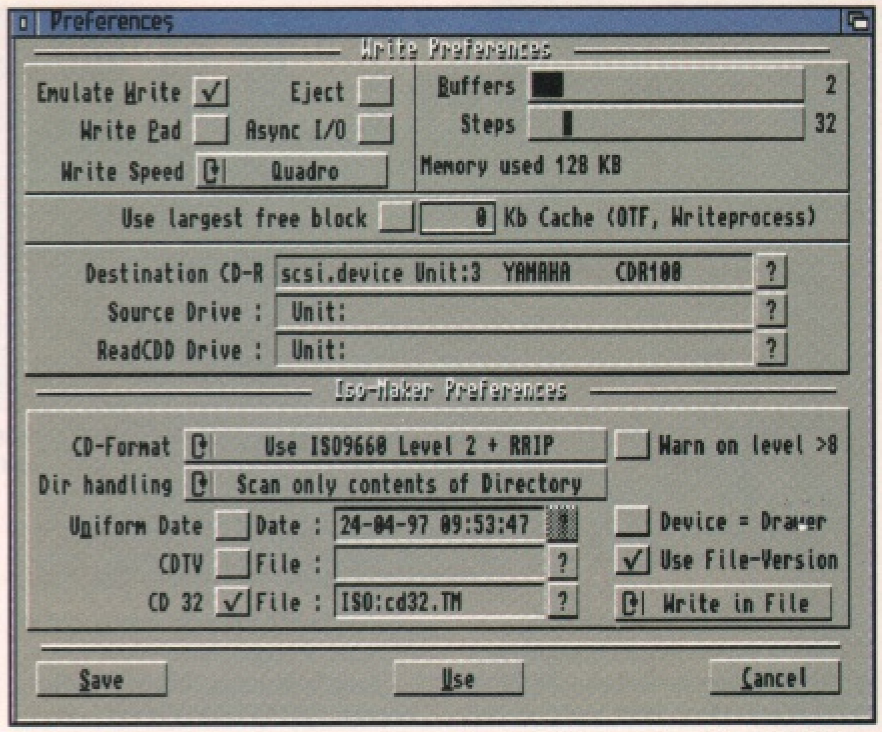
OVERALL
Good expansion potential only partially realised.

72%

Burn It

■ Price: £79-£109 ■ Developer: DnS
■ Supplier: Titan Computers ✆ +49 (0)421 481620

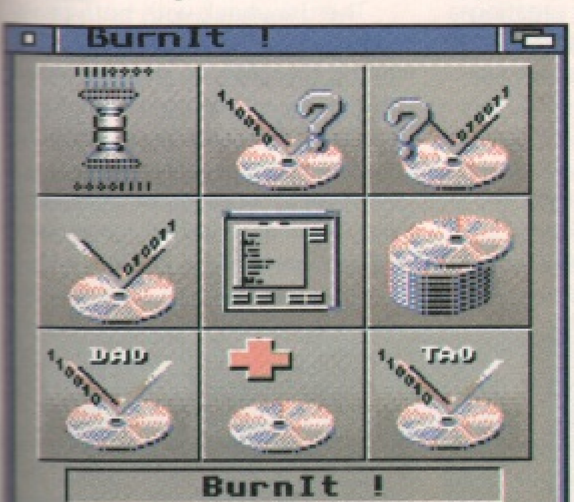
As the cost of CD writers plummets, another software package arrives to challenge MasterISO and MakeCD. Just how does it shape up?



▲ Burn It's general preferences shows that it's well armed for creating Amiga CD-ROMs.

Last month we reviewed the excellent MakeCD software and awarded it 92%. Against such stiff competition, Burn It arrives sporting a different selection of features including the ability to scan a CD's structure to duplicate it perfectly by writing in the so-called Disk-At-Once mode. This is the killer feature of Burn It, as every other package writes in Track-At-Once which places some restrictions when working with audio – fixed gaps between tracks being the most obvious problem.

This feature may be Burn It's greatest strength but it doesn't let the show down in the other areas of creating Amiga CD-ROMs. The GUI runs on a custom screen (of your choice) and is somewhat easier to navigate than MakeCD's kludgy Triton GUI library based effort. It's actually even more basic, relying on GadTools alone but it's easier to find what you want quickly. There's a main menu window with a group of 9 icons – clicking on each will activate a major function of the package. Unfortunately, you can only run one at a time.



▲ Burn Its main features are click on icons... It's a pity that you can only run them one at a time.

CD-R support

Most of the critical preferences are laid out on a simple but busy GUI. The buffers settings tells of actual used memory. The package will use the excellent asyncio.library if desired like MakeCD, for efficient hard drive performance. Dummy write can be activated as well as eject after writing. The SCSI device used for CD writing, reading CD audio and as a source for CD to CD copying can be set. Burn It is compatible with a range of CD-Rs though it doesn't let you know that it specifically recognises yours, even if it does. Check the demo on this month's CD for a list of supported CD-Rs. The key Philips, Yamaha, Sony, Ricoh, Plextor, Plasmon and TEAC drives are supported which covers most bases.

The ISO building engine is quite sophisticated. Burn It is capable of writing simple 100% compliant ISO 9660 volumes up to level II with full RockRidge extensions, CD32/CDTV boot straps and so on. It doesn't have MakeCD's ability to sort file extensions such as .info for quicker Workbench icons. Burn It also records specific Amiga file flags such as the Pure and Script flags. Only modern CD filing systems like ASIM and AmiCDFS will recognise these though. The ISO maker is easy to use and after scanning files to be added to the CD, displays the number of used blocks (although strangely not a Mb counter as only MasterISO does). Accessing the Primary Volume Descriptor with the volume name of the CD and the general preferences is easily done. Building the ISO volume itself is on a par with MasterISO and ever so slightly faster than MakeCD. However, MakeCD can be far quicker by building and writing on the fly which saves time and significant amounts of hard drive space. Given the cost of Burn It, this is a serious feature oversight.

Back up morals

As mentioned at the start, Burn It really shines when it comes to Disk-At-Once. Put simply, for the production of audio CDs you can't beat Burn It. Kicking the DAO function into expert mode allows editing of index and track markers so that a track on a CD could be in the middle of audio and so on. The GUI is a little buggy and needs improvement but everything needed is there and works well. There's no doubt that Burn It is also surprising well armed to 'back up' console game CDs but this isn't the place to go into the morals of that endeavour. Strangely, the version of Burn It that can do DAO recording costs extra and is certainly not cheap. The Track-At-Once version of Burn It also compares quite badly price wise to the cheaper and more capable MakeCD.

There's extensive options for reading digital audio data raw from a CD, converting existing audio formats to raw CDDA data and copying a data track from a source CD-ROM directly to the CD writer (which I never really saw as a good idea).

As a Disk-At-Once capable CD-R package you can't beat Burn It, though it seems a little silly to charge extra for this function. It does create faultless Amiga CD-ROMs though I'd like to see options to create PC specific CDs with Joliet/Romeo ISO types but this criticism could cover all Amiga software at the moment. If you're primarily interested in making data CD-ROMs, MakeCD clearly still has the edge but if you intend to be doing some serious audio mastering and perhaps some of that 'backing up' then Burn It may be the shot. Burn It is a truly professional package and certainly comes recommended as long as you can afford it. ■

Mat Bettinson

BURN IT

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements: Kickstart 3.0, 68020 with a fairly sizeable hard drive plus a support SCSI CD-R recorder.

ease of use 94%
Doesn't get much easier, the documentation is the best so far.

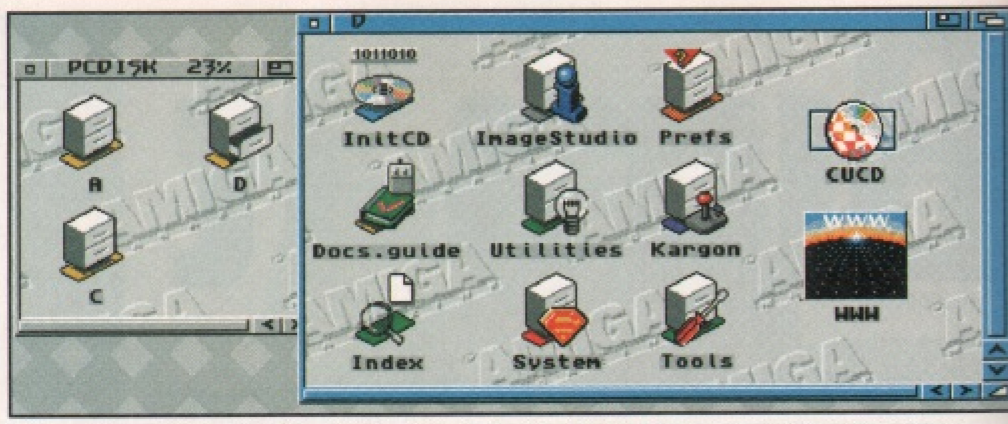
performance 88%
DAO is great but needs more ISO options and write-on-fly.

value for money 74%
Doesn't compare well to MakeCD but DAO can be worth it.

OVERALL
Excellent CD writing package.
85%

Gemini

■ **Price: £29.95** ■ **Developer: Intrinsic**
■ **Supplier: Intrinsic ✆ 01474 533500**



▲ **Accessing a CUCD via the Gemini. The CD is in the PC's CD-ROM drive and, since the network has proper long filename support, everything works just fine.**

Getting data between an Amiga and a PC can be tricky. Luckily, Workbench 3.0 and above come with CrossDOS as standard so that the Amiga can format, read and write 720K MSDOS disks. It's still not ideal, as these disks only store 720K at a time and large files need to be split or even archived with a program like Zip to preserve long filenames. Yes, 8.3 filenames still remain a pain for the Amiga.

Enter the Gemini system. It consists of a parallel cable with PC and Amiga installation floppy disks. The PC software is simply copied onto the PC's hard drive. The Amiga has an installer which copies all of the relevant files onto Workbench. A device driver called PC is stashed in storage/DOS drivers. To mount the network we now just click on this DOS driver icon after running the PC's software.

A default icon, 'PC DISK', will appear on the Workbench. Opening this and activating 'show all' icons, will display directories corresponding to the drives on the PC. For instance, PC:C/ is the PC's C drive. The network is unidirectional, although the PC doesn't see the Amiga it wants everything to be done from the Amiga end.

Transfer rates are in the order of 39K/s to the PC and unfortunately only 20K/s to the Amiga. Not blistering, but still a lot faster than serial and we get long filenames and are free to do something else if it's copying across huge files of data.

The Gemini system falls down however, as ICS seem to have made no effort whatsoever to improve upon the basic PD Ami2PC shareware. There's no PC installer and the Amiga installer doesn't tell you where it's put the drivers. It also copies files to your C: dir without telling you what they are. No default icon is provided for the PC: drive. Finally, no way of altering the network settings after installation is provided.

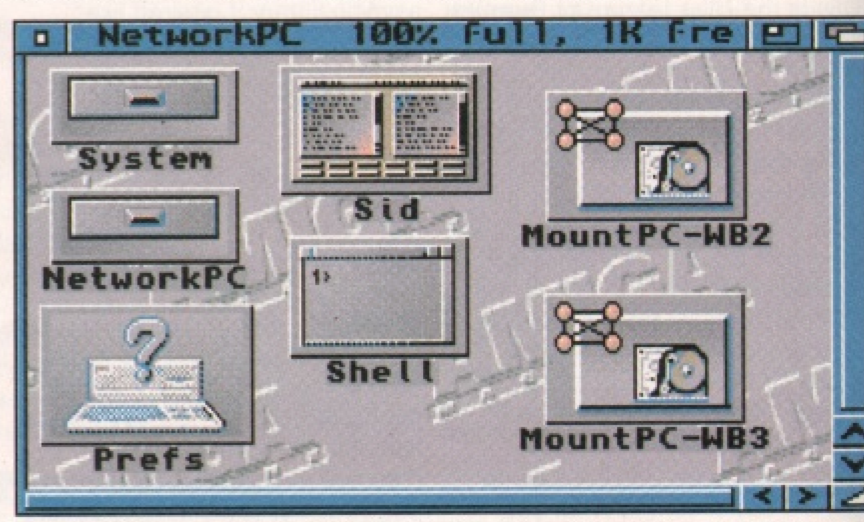
There's no doubting that Gemini does work but it's a pretty pertinent example of how not to present what is a useful package. Any hardware package should consist of more than just a video case, a cable and two shovelware floppy disks of PD.■

Mat Bettinson

A500+ A600 A1200 A3000 A4000 **67%**

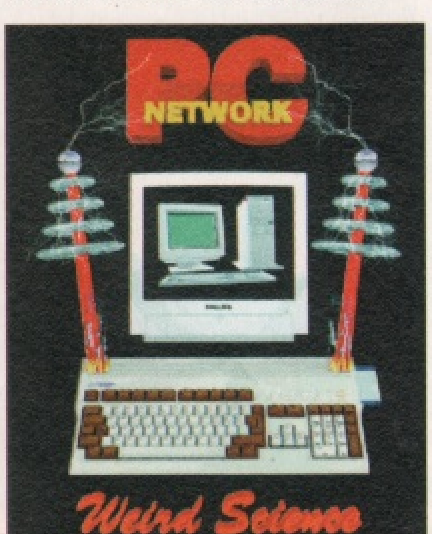
Network PC

■ **Price: £19.95** ■ **Developer: Weird Science**
■ **Supplier: Weird Science ✆ 0116 234 0682**



▲ **Weird Science went to the effort of making the Amiga disk bootable, added some proper icons and fixed up the installer. It also makes a useful Network PC drawer to run it from.**

Weird Science has based Network PC on the same PD software as used in the Gemini system reviewed above, but has taken it further. Called the Network PC package, it provides a parallel cable with Amiga and PC installation disks but here the similarity ends; its cable is a good metre longer than Gemini's and presentation is far better with much enhanced PD software.



A proper Windows Install Shield installer is provided on the PC. It asks where you want it and adds Network PC to the Windows Program group so it can be easily run by selecting the icon via the start bar. The sparse configuration options are also handled during installation but this is certainly better than simply expecting you to copy the files yourself as with Gemini's system.

The Amiga side sees an improvement also; the disgusting standard icons are replaced with Magic Workbench icons. Weird Science always did have a fetish for Magic Workbench. The Amiga disk will actually boot and contains the drivers ready to run right from the floppy disk. The Installer is much improved also, creating a handy directory with icons to activate the few utilities that come with the Ami2PC package. The most useful is MountPC which activates the network without having to go digging for the DOS driver yourself. The preferences can be altered via an installer, unlike the Gemini where editing env. vars. needs doing by hand.

The Gemini and Weird Science software won't work with each other's cables but both of them perform identically. The Gemini is provided with a slightly later beta version of the software, but otherwise the Network PC package is far better in terms of software.

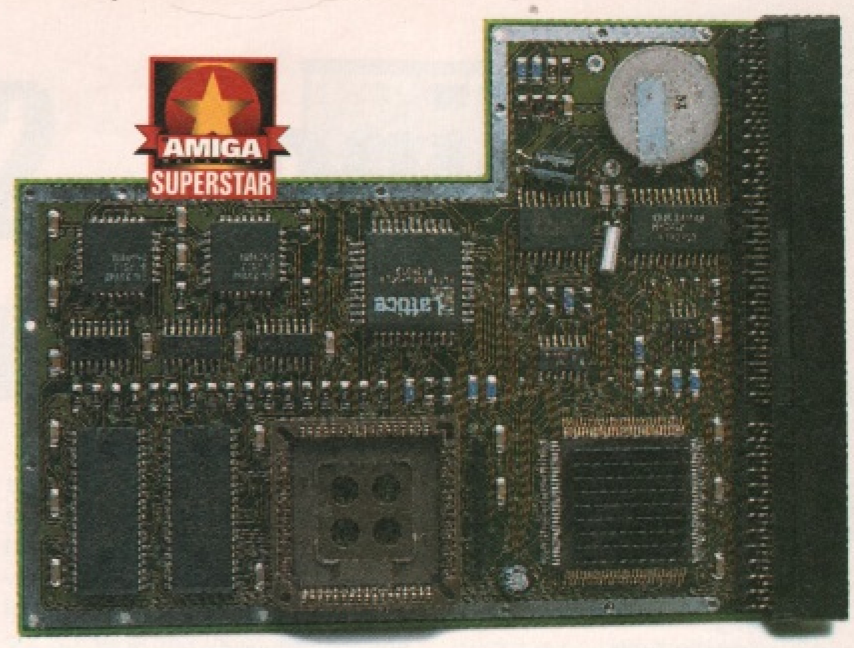
The drawback with both packages is that they hog the CPU during transfers so that the Amiga effectively seizes up. I would have liked to have seen interrupt driven parallel to solve this problem, even given speed loss. You can't beat it for getting files between the Amiga and the PC, (barring the odd unexplained time-out) and it even works great on top of the Siamese system. ■

Mat Bettinson

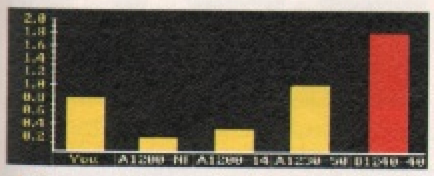
A500+ A600 A1200 A3000 A4000 **88%**

Viper Mk4
42Mhz 4MbRAM

■ Price: £89.99 ■ Developer: M-Tech
■ Supplier: Power Computing ✆ 01234 851500



Power Computing seems to be taking on the role of barrow boys of the accelerator world with its latest line of acceleration products. Like those East End street corner fruitiers, Power is chucking more and more in the bag until you feel you can't afford to say no. 4Mb of RAM? Fair enough. Tell you what, call it ninety quid and I'll chuck in a 43 Mhz '030 chip too. And just for you I'll stick in a copy of Doom clone Breathless. Another fifteen and I'll chuck in a 33Mhz FPU to make yer Imagine renders go like a cat with a firework up it's behind. Tenner on that and I'll chuck in the Wordworth office CD (we gave that 92% at £50 in February). You can't say fairer than that, can you? No, you can't. This board's such a bargain it's crazy.



▲ A 4x speed increase is 80% of a 50Mhz 030

It's hard to believe the price is for real. The '030 has a natty little heatsink glued to it, generally a good move but covering the writing on the chip and we wouldn't be too surprised if it was overclocked, but it seems to work fine. It isn't up to the speed of the top of the line '030 accelerators such as the Blizzard Mk4 50Mhz, but it is plenty cheaper.

There are of course niggles – aren't there always? The most obvious niggle is that this board isn't expandable. The RAM chips are surface mounts rather than using a SIMM socket the way higher end accelerators do, so you are stuck with that 4Mb. The point of this board however is that it brings acceleration to the masses – people who haven't considered themselves as power users can now put themselves right up to current spec for a very reasonable outlay.

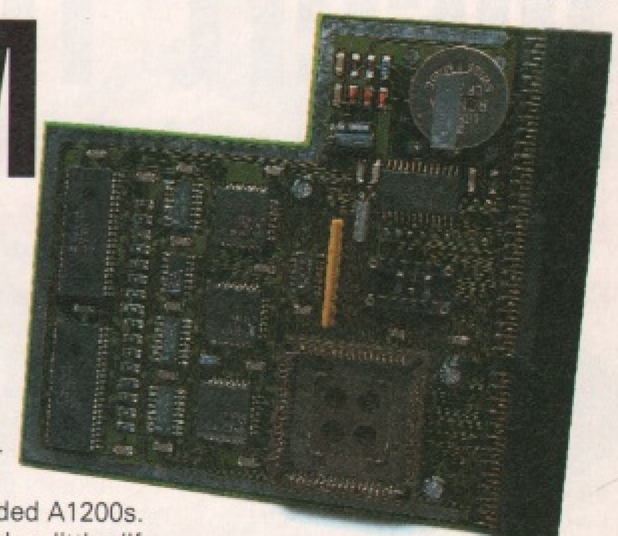
For £105 you get a pretty serious accelerator with 4Mb RAM, an FPU and Breathless for free. We strongly advise the unaccelerated to buy this if you can't afford anything meatier. It will seriously improve your machine and if you have a CD-ROM drive, you are in for a treat... Wordworth 6 Office CD-ROM for a tenner is as big a bargain as the board! Now there's no excuse to be under-powered. ■

Andrew Korn

A1200 **94%**

Power 4Mb RAM

■ Price: £49.99 ■ Developer: M-Tech
■ Supplier: Power Computing ✆ 01234 851500



This and the product above represent a half of Power Computing's current assault on the expansion board market. The other two are a high end A1200 '030 card and an '030 board for giving the old A600 a new lease of life at turbo speeds – watch for reviews next month. In this new hierarchy, this card is bottom dog. Still, for £50, you can't expect much can you. Just an unexpandable 4Mb expansion board. Oh, with an FPU slot – add another tenner for a 20Mhz 68882 or £15 for a 33Mhz version. Oh yeah, and there's Breathless chucked in free, and of course for an extra tenner they'll throw in a copy of Wordworth 6 Office CD-ROM too. Damn! They're at it again, throwing silly bargains our way like there was no tomorrow!

In practical terms, you have the obvious benefit of a perfectly reasonable total of 6Mb of RAM instead of the measly 2Mb the A1200 is shipped with and the presence of Fast RAM which will speed up your Amiga as it avoids the bottlenecks which hold up Chip RAM. You can look at the graphs to see the difference it makes but roughly speaking, this one makes your computer run at about 50% faster than unexpanded A1200s.



▲ No new CPU but Fast RAM is quicker than standard A1200.

Fitting an FPU makes little difference in everyday life, but when using a package designed to take advantage of an FPU such as Vista or Imagine it can make a huge difference. FPUs, or Floating Point Units, can deal with mathematical fractions without having to convert them the way a non FPU equipped system does, making some maths intensive processes such as 3D rendering go many times faster. In comparison, the board above makes your computer go about 400% of unexpanded speed and has the same FPU advantages.

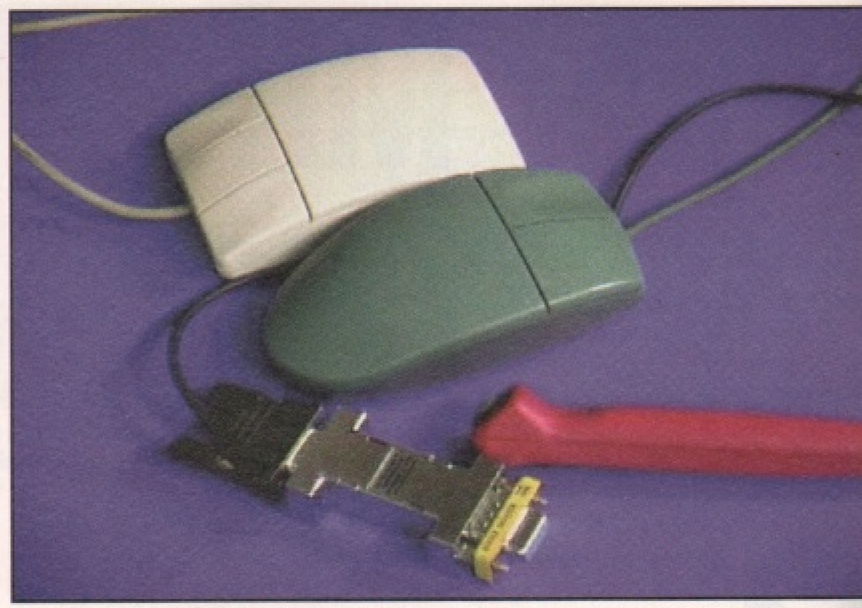
We are going to take an almost unheard of stance. This product has a Superstar award – because of the low price and bonus extras it would be churlish not to. But we find hard to recommend it over the one above. Even if cost is a major issue for you, the Viper Mk4 above isn't that much more in terms of cash, but is streets ahead in overall value. ■

Andrew Korn

A1200 **90%**

Topolino

■ **Price: 49DM (£18.00)**
■ **Supplier: Raach ✆+49-07587-1201**



▲ The Topolino allows PC serial input devices such as mice, trackballs, or even infra red controls to work on your Amiga. It just sits between the mouse port and the serial device.

If you're a Populous fiend or just an all round Amiga user, sooner or later your mouse is will die. Most should enjoy a long, fruitful life, but the end is normally swift.

Replacing mice is easy – flip through the pages here, and you'll find dealers ready to sell you various replacements. Prices aren't bad but choice is somewhat limited compared to PC mice.

This is because the vast majority of PC mice are serial mice rather than the Amiga's "bus" design. Up until now, PC mice have been off limits to us as to get serial mice working with Amigas you typically need to give up your serial port and load additional software drivers. So, if your system goes down, you are without mouse control until restored by hand. These mice are useless for most games too.

The Topolino gets around all the problems. It's a small silvery box that sits between your Amiga's mouse port and the PC serial mouse of your choice. Inside is a micro controller which allows use of the vast range of PC input devices on your Amiga and it's as simple as it sounds.

No additional software is needed to open up a whole range of products to your Amiga – not just cheapie mice, but a variety of trackballs and infrared devices, including things like the Logitech hand-held trackball. This comes in very handy for group demonstrations and the like, or just for showing off by controlling your computer from across the room.

One pitfall is that many cheap PC mice have three buttons but the middle button isn't wired up, presumably as a cost saving. Still it's quite possible to get a good PC mouse for a less than £10.

The Topolino is compatible with all Amiga models (though A1500/2000s need an adaptor)

As to cost, the Topolino is more expensive than some current Amiga mice. But if you want to open the doors to serial inputs and mass market peripherals, the Topolino could pay off for you. ■

Jason Compton

CD32 A500 A500+ A600 A1200 A1500 A2000 A3000 A4000

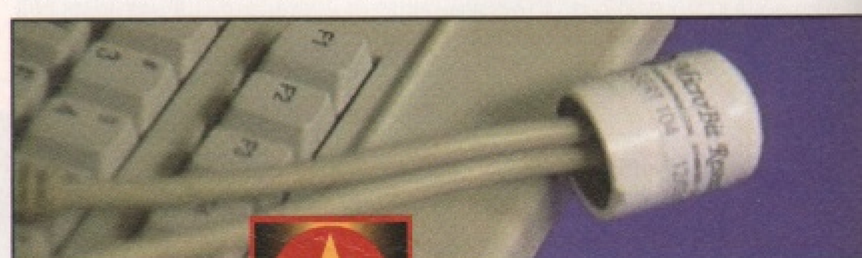
69%

Insert 104

PC Keyboard Adaptor

■ **Price: CAN$39 (approx. £18)** ■ **Developer: MicroBit Research**
■ **Supplier: www.nationalamiga.com ✆ 1 519 858 8760**

AMIGA SUPERSTAR



▲ If you've fancied using the variety of PC keyboards then Insert 104 is for you.

I've been convinced, during my six-years as the owner of a number of Amigas, of how durable and well-built they are. I've never had a problem that required repair. But I have seen problems crop up in keyboards as time goes on. It's a combination of intense use and the inevitable drops to the floor, but sooner or later a few essential keys go out of whack – important ones, like, say, the Shift key or the Spacebar or the Return key.

Replacing the keyboard on a big-box Amiga isn't cheap. In the US, they are typically at least US$50 (about £35), and in the UK often twice that. It's hardly surprising – Commodore built replacement parts but they haven't been around for some time, and while Amiga Technologies did produce keyboards for the A4000T, there's a relatively small number of those out there. On the other hand, the PC industry churns out colossal amounts of keyboards for new systems as well as for replacements, and these can be had for prices around £10 in consumer surplus catalogues. So, with the idea of bridging that gap in mind, the Insert104 from MicroBit Research was born.

It's no new concept, of course. Lazarus Engineering's KB-10 adaptor promised much, but after a severe crash you had to switch off, making it impossible to Control-Amiga-Amiga.

The Insert 104 is smaller, cheaper, and free from the problems of the KB-10.

Using a PC keyboard on an Amiga used to be uncomfortable because while PC keyboards had more total keys, the arrangement was all wrong for our purposes. However, the new "Windows95" keyboards add three keys (for a new total of 104), two of which map perfectly for Amiga users – the left and right "Windows" keys are exactly where you'd expect your left and right Amiga keys to be. The rest of the keyboard maps more or less as you'd expect, with the bonus that the "Windows Menu" key is mapped as a screen-flipper, Insert and Home can be used to answer requesters, and the extra European keys are mapped at F11 and F12 on the PC keyboard. Typically, a PC keyboard will require you to get used to a Control key at a new location but if you're used to an Amiga keyboard you'll easily adjust.

Why use the Insert 104? Well, if you're looking to replace an Amiga keyboard, the Insert 104's price of about £18 plus a cheap PC keyboard comes out at less than a new Amiga keyboard.

There are also a number of "gimmick" PC keyboards, such as Star Trek-style designs, and if you're into that sort of thing don't hold your breath for someone to build a special Amiga model.

Presently, National Amiga does not have a UK distributor, but are hoping to establish one soon. National has a track record of serving customers worldwide, so if you can't wait rest assured that they will take care of you. ■

Jason Compton

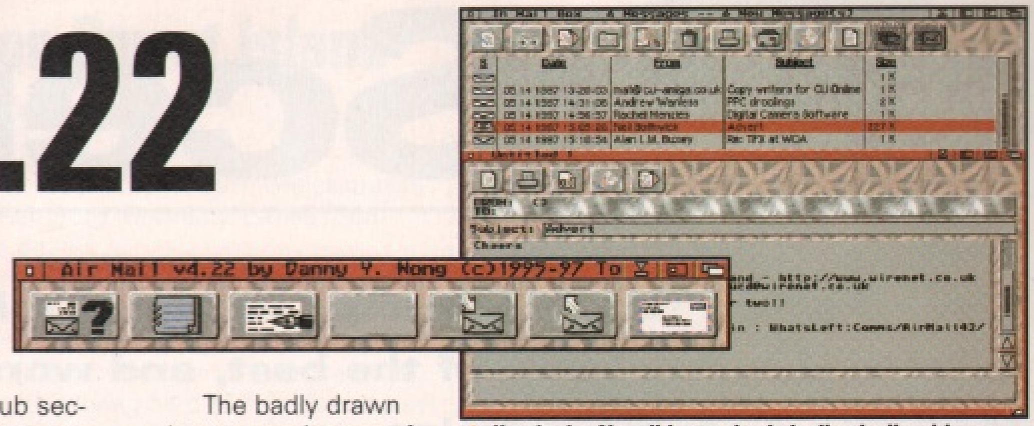
CD32 A500 A500+ A600 A1200 A1500 A2000 A3000 A4000

93%

Air Mail 4.22

■ **Price: ($40) £25** ■ **Developer: Toysoft**

■ **Supplier: www.spots.ca.ab/~toysoft/**



▲ **Here's the Airmail button bank dealing badly with my MUI textures. The reader itself can be seen underneath.**

Air Mail is an E-mail client for the Amiga. While there are several shareware options, this Canadian commercial effort promises an impressive array of features to back up the £25 price tag. All Air Mail requires to function is a decent TCP/IP stack like AmiTCP 4.0, Miami or MLink, Workbench 2.1 or higher and, of course, a mail server account which is normally provided by an Internet provider when you sign up. Air Mail is also an MUI application so MUI 3.2 or later will need to be installed also.

Air Mail's documentation is intelligently provided in HTML form since a netted Amiga will have a web browser on hand.

When running Air Mail, we're presented with an icon button bar to access each of the sub sections. I believe this to be convoluted as if I do not have the mail package iconified, I wish to be viewing the incoming mail folder.

To activate major sections of Air Mail you have to click on the badly drawn and unfamiliar icons, although the first order of business should be to get rid of the American/Canadian voice which announces "Yew gawt mayl!".

The catalogue of annoyances doesn't stop there: The package randomly decides how much text to quote when it replies to mail, the From and To: headings appear totally blank at all times and the decoding of attachments will only go to a preset location inside the Air Mail direction! (And you have to press a button even to make Air Mail do that)...

The badly drawn buttons make use of the MagicWB palette, (tough luck on anyone who doesn't run it), and have icons that are not easily interpreted. Some of the icons even disappeared by themselves and I got random errors when trying to send mail. Also my signature always appeared corrupt in the Edit Signature section. No other PD mail package I have tried has any problems with my mail server

Air Mail is reasonably well decked out with features, the folder handling and pre-defined Forms for sending E-mails and so on are nice touches. However the basic functions are lacking compared with even the totally free YAM. The GUI is badly constructed with MUI to look only good if you never bothered to customise your prefs, just like the author. Heck I even had the odd Air Mail crash which is totally unacceptable for a basic mail package. When ToySoft sort out these problems, Air Mail should be a top contender but right now, no one could recommend shelling out money for this poor program when much better packages can be found in the public domain. ■

Mat Bettinson

A500+ A1200 A3000 A4000 **68%**

IDE Zip Drive

■ **Price: £119.95** ■ **Developer: Iomega**

■ **Supplier: Eyetech ✆ 01642 713185**



The IDE Zip drive looks very much like a floppy drive. It has an unassuming appearance for something which promises all of the advantages of a removable hard drive for a fraction of the price.

Anyone with a SCSI connector such as a Squirrel has been able to use Zips since they first hit the streets. The advantage of this unit is twofold: firstly, it needs no SCSI interface, and secondly it is cheaper. Connecting the drive is relatively straightforward – very similar to installing an IDE CD-ROM drive. A step down connector from 44 pins to 40 is necessary for A1200 users, but A4000 owners can just plug straight in. The power connector is a standard 3.5" hard drive type. Eyetech provide very straightforward driver software which is a breeze to use. If you already use a hard drive and a CD-ROM drive, you'll need an IDE splitter though.

Alas, all isn't roses. The IDE interface doesn't seem to behave itself, leading to a fairly major limitation. To work around this, Eyetech's software installs a Rigid Disk Block (RDB), the equivalent to a disk boot block for a hard drive) to the Zip disk as if it was a hard drive. As a result disks are mounted only when the computer boots up. So if you must change disk, you have to reset. Eyetech make something of a selling point of this, suggesting that users might want to have several Zip disks configured as system boot disks and thereby have a different system set up for each member of the family.

You may consider having to reset is a minor problem, in which case then this product is truly great. We however, are not really convinced that it is worth the 50 odd quid saving over a SCSI device.

We are however sure that this problem with resets will eventually be solved – the latest version of IDEfix claims to cope, although we haven't got it to work yet. We did just about get it working via a mountlist using AFS (Ami File Safe, which has major speed advantages over FFS on a Zip), albeit briefly.

Eyetech have told us that they are indeed working on solving the problem – when they do, this is will undoubtedly be a 90% plus product. Until then, most people would be best served by waiting until Eyetech sort out this one small gremlin, in an otherwise, excellent product. ■

Andrew Korn

A1200 A4000 **85%**

PD Scene

The PD scene turns up trumps yet again this month, showing some of the best, and worst things to do to your Amiga.

★★★★★	**Totally blinding**
★★★★☆	**Good**
★★★☆☆	**Average**
★★☆☆☆	**Substandard**
★☆☆☆☆	**Oh dear**

Posiden

Game

■ **Available from:** Classic Amiga PD, 11 Deansgate, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 2SH

■ **Tel:** 0161 723 1638

■ **Price:** £1 plus 75p P&P per order.

I remember seeing games like this on the VIC20 and they were bad then. In this masterpiece of z-grade gaming you have been magically turned into a fish, and can be restored to human form only by the ancient Greek sea god Poseidon. In your quest for this fishy deity you must float gently up and down colliding with the small yellow fish which zip from one end of the screen to the other.

Your quest is made difficult by the presence of an ever increasing number of jellyfish. These aren't really a threat in themselves, as they are very easy to dodge.

The difficulty of the game comes from the fact that avoiding being stung by jellyfish puts about half of the little yellow fish completely out of your reach, and as the little yellow fish are so infrequent you tend to rush recklessly for them in a desperate attempt to end the tedium as quickly as possible.

I really am the last person to claim that a game has to have flashy graphics to have playability – the major problem with this game though is that it has neither. ★☆☆☆☆



Posiden

Star People vol1

Slideshow

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

■ **Tel:**01374 150972.

■ **Price:** 50p per disk & 75p P&P.

This disk appears to be an advert for a scanning service. Whilst there are always going to be people who want to use a scanning service, I would be surprised if there were too many people who would want to use this disk.

It's a simple 'play a mod and show some pics' sort of a slideshow, the images being scans of an assortment of famous people. From a 16 grey scale image of Sandra Bullock looking like no one warned her a photographer would be present, to a HAM image of Peter Andre, who apparently thinks he is a musician, this is a disparate collection of celebrities some of whom are bound to be objectionable to anyone.



Star People

I could understand someone wanting a Sandra Bullock slideshow, or a Peter Andre slideshow. They would have poor taste, but I could understand it. With something this eclectic, I can't see people finding it particularly intriguing beyond the technical aspect of viewing quality scans. Pity then that there aren't any quality scans on view. ★☆☆☆☆

Kick It

Game

Game of the Month

■ **Available from:** Saddle Tramps PD, 1 Lower Mill Close, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, S63 9BY

■ **Tel:** 01709 888127

■ **Price:** 80p plus 50p P&P.



Kick it



Allow me to apologise in advance for awarding this game of the month. I may have taken leave of my senses. This whole title is sheer lunacy from beginning to end but I don't care. Anything this insane gets my vote. Within moments of this loading up, everyone in the office was crowded around watching in hysterics. All good games start with a story. You play the Laiden, a being who appears to be a naked skinny bloke with a fish for a night cap. He wakes one morning to realise that he is 10 minutes late returning his "Nintendo cassette" to the rental shop. On his way to the shop to return the cassette, he has to fight his way past the evil cassette zombies that the shop owners have sent to hunt him down. Luckily the Laiden is blessed with the ability to shuffle along on one foot, holding the other ready to inflict monopedal violence on the zombies as they approach.

The presentation of the game is excellent. There is a suitably bouncy soundtrack, bizarre sound effects and brilliantly drawn cartoon characters. The zombies shamble along great and lie with their legs sticking into the air when they are killed (can you kill a zombie?) and the scrolling backgrounds are filled with bizarre details and suspicious looking characters in brown coats. I suspect there is some weird, perverted subtext here somewhere, for which blame programmers Los Labians Division of the Three Little Elks, who appear to be either a Swedish coding team or a care in the community collective. ★★★★★

Aerial Racers

Racing game

■ **Available from:** Saddle Tramps PD, 1 Lower Mill Close, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, S63 9BY



■ **Tel:** 01709 888127

■ **Price:** 80p plus 50p P&P.

Hey! I was just beginning to get depressed about the quality of PD games when this disk, which was rammed unceremoniously into my drive, turned out to deserve gentler treatment. A racing game in the style of Acid software's overhead cow-with-a-caravan extravaganza Skidmarks, Aerial racers combines playability and a good degree of depth. Up to four people can race tiny little cars around a scrolling isometric racetrack which is about twice the size of the screen.

Although the driving dynamics are a little odd, the game works well with fast action, manic collisions and tracks which can include ramps and jumps. There are still a lot of little niggles to iron out, such as being able to drive the wrong way up jumps and the fact that most of the cars to choose from haven't been implemented yet, but thankfully, none of this detracts from the fun in any major way.



What really makes this game though is the fact that it comes with a rather useful track editor and, unlike many so-called editors, it actually works. You can't do T junctions for some reason, but you can make icy or sandy roads and alter the track height to make ramps and jumps. Graphics are basic but well done and the controls clear and well laid out. With a few little fixes and add ons, this title would be worth a licenseware fee. Its current status as freeware makes this Insane Software product a real bargain. ★★★★☆

Lost on Parrot Island

Adventure

■ **Available from:** Frank Otto, Grelckstrasse 27, 22529 Hamburg, Germany. E-mail robocop@dame.de

■ **Price:**£7.99 plus £1 P&P

With a name like Lost on Parrot Island author Franck Otto isn't trying hard to hide the inspiration behind this product. We would all love to see an Amiga release of Monkey Island 3, but until then, this isn't a bad little compromise.

If the quality of graphics in an adventure game is particularly important to you, you'll probably have some difficulty getting on with this title as the graphics are pretty appaling. However they do convey what is going on perfectly clearly, and I consider the layout and quality of the puzzles paramount in judging an adventure game, factors that Parrot Island scores well in.

You must escape from some distant Caribbean island, getting involved in a variety of scrapes and adventures on the way. As far as I played this title, I found the workings relatively sane, something which many GRAC and DOOPSI titles fall down on. Only one puzzle was solved by the old tactic – do everything to everything: I finally figured out that the torso of an old pirate is best put in the sea. About the level of strained logic you can expect from a professional title.

I hope Frank Otto works with a graphic artist on his next title. He acknowledges the weakness of Parrot Island in this area, and this is something that needs to be addressed if he wants to get his games up to professional standards. At just under £9 including P&P for a 2 disk adventure, it's a bit steep. When Frank finds a UK distributor the price will hopefully drop a little, and if you've done the tour of the big releases, then this is a good adventure game thirst quencher. ★★★★☆



Aerial Racers

Slipstream

Game demo

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

■ **Tel:** 01374 150972.

■ **Price:** 50p per disk & 75p P&P.

Wipeout 2097 on the Playstation is possibly the best racing game ever. To make a clone for the Amiga seems foolhardy – given that the original is heavily dependent on fast moving texture maps, the hardest thing for the Amiga to do. Which is exactly why an Amiga programmer was bound to give it a go sooner or later.

In this demo you to fly a hover bike down a texture mapped track and a tunnel. There are three versions, 1x1, 1x2 and 1x3 pixel modes, allow different speeds to be traded off for quality. In 1x1 mode it looks damn good, but is just too slow. In 2x2 the graphics aren't so hot but you get a reasonable sense of speed on a fast '030.

Coder Niki Hemmings and artist Richard Whittal have put together an impressive little routine, although there is no game and there probably never will be. It's more demo than game really – but an example of the quality of coders on the Amiga. With the arrival of PowerPC chips Amiga games like this will be possible, but not on current systems. It remains to be seen what all those dedicated Amiga coders with their hugely optimised code are able to pull off with that kind of processing power behind them. ★★★☆☆



Lost on Parrot Island



Slipstream

PD Utilities

Andrew Korn trawls his way through PD, and catches a top educational program, an excellent database and a shedful of tools.

★★★★★	Totally blinding
★★★★☆	Good
★★★☆☆	Average
★★☆☆☆	Substandard
★☆☆☆☆	Oh dear

Direct-a-disk

Telephone directory

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

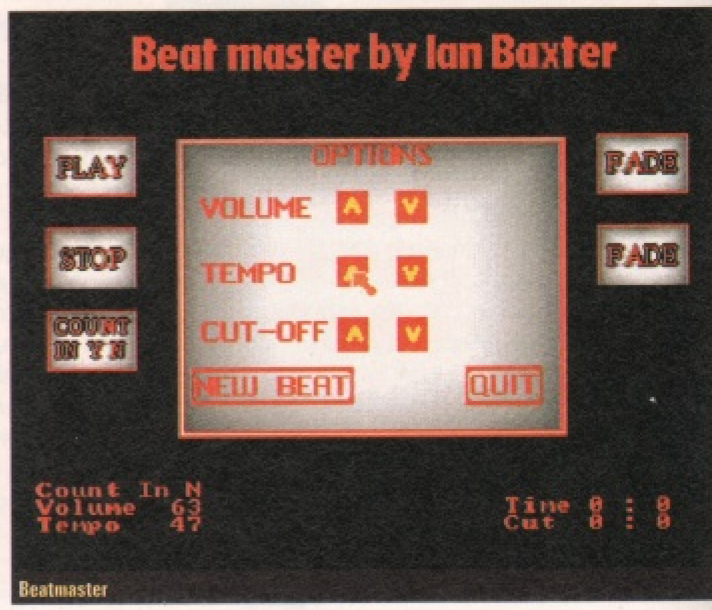
■ **Tel:** 01374 150972.

■ **Price:** 50p per disk & 75p P&P.

A telephone directory on a single floppy disk? They said it couldn't be done, and here's the disk that proves them right. There are a lot of people who really use their Amigas; they want their computers to work for them as a specific tool, and will write the software to do this if necessary. This is the source of most PD/shareware, and is why it is always of such variable quality.

Direct-a-disk aims to be an all in one telephone number database. You can't find every number in the country listed here, but it has is a dialling code facility and a programmable database. The whole lot is presented in a custom front end in a traditionally tacky AMOS style including such questionable wonders as red text on cyan.

The international section includes phone numbers for airports which haven't been updated at least since the 1 was added after the initial 0s of UK phone numbers, and possibly since spitfires were flying from them. The local dialling codes section could have been useful, but the first one I tried out was wrong, and you can't exit a search until you've scanned through every match – type in New and you get 72 entries from New Abbey to Newtyle, hit return before you type anything in and you have to click through every entry or reset your computer. Avoid. ★☆☆☆☆



Beatmaster

Beatmaster

Metronome

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

■ **Tel:** 01374 150972.

■ **Price:** 50p per disk & 75p P&P.

A metronome simulator sounds like a bizarre idea, but author, guitarist Ian Baxter, likes to play with a metronome for timing (easier to find than a drummer, twice the IQ and drinks less). He found metronomes' clicking noise annoying. So, leaping salmon-like to his Amiga, he created this odd package as the solution.

Rather than just playing clicks, it plays a small selection of drum loops. Tempo, volume and fade-ins can all be configured for the individual user. There is not a whole lot that this does which you can't do just as well with a cheap electronic keyboard, so this is really only for the kind of guitarist who wouldn't be seen dead playing an instrument you can't easily strap around your neck and ponce around on stage with. ★★★☆☆

Titanic 2

Educational

Utility of the Month

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

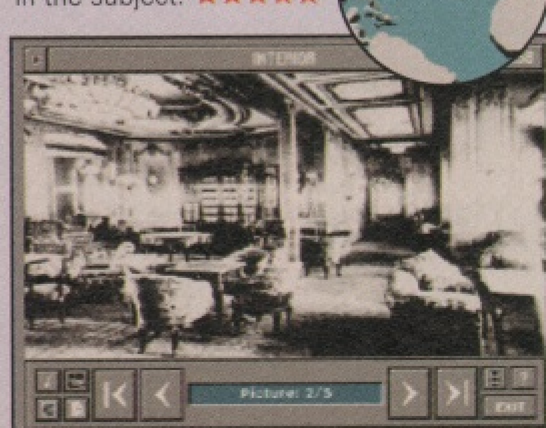
■ **Tel:** 01374 150972.

■ **Price:** £1 for 2 disks & 75p P&P.

With commercial Amiga educational releases being as rare as a classroom with sufficient text-books, it is a real pleasure to see a PD title that is as solidly professional as this. This two disk encyclopaedia is nicely presented and covers the subject matter with an exhaustive detail. By clicking on cargo, for instance, you can access the complete cargo manifests, and by clicking on people you are presented with a selection of photo portraits of many of the major players in the history of the doomed Cunard liner. As you click on each of them, you are presented with text describing them and the role they played in the epic story.

If I am giving the impression that this is a brilliant school room tool, then all well and good, but don't think that this is the end of it. A thick book on the subject will no doubt contain all that this program would and even more, but you would be lucky to find any book that presented the information as clearly and quickly as this does. This guide is an absolutely excellent presentation of an interesting and controversial part of recent history and one I recommend highly to anyone with an interest in the subject. ★★★★★





F-base

Database

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

■ **Tel:** 01374 150972.

■ **Price:** 50p per disk & 75p P&P.

Is there really enough room out there for yet

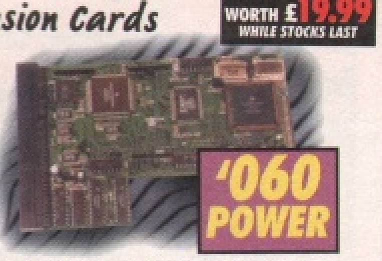
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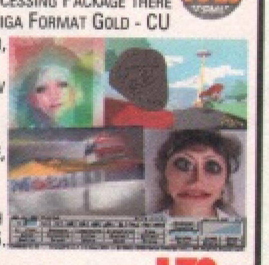
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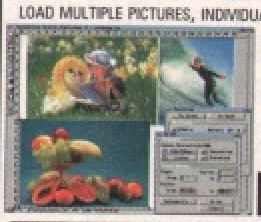
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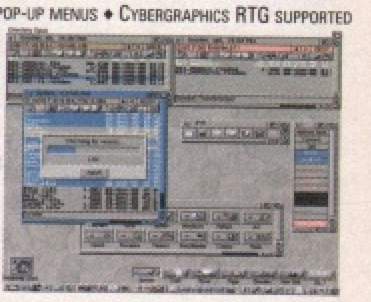


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another simple, functional, easy to use database? Damn right there is. This one doesn't have the search and sort facilities of a serious commercial database package, in some ways resembling a spreadsheet used as a database package more than a dedicated database, but then it is a shareware package with a 50FF (about £6) registration fee, and most users are going to be after something simpler.
This package though certainly has a real niche that it can cover. We are in the realm of the record collection database here, and for this, F-base excels. With 30 fields, up to 9999 records (in the registered version), a rather attractive and multitasking, OS compliant presentation, features such as cut and paste and A-Z tables, this has all the features you expect from this end of the market. Particularly usefully for the record collection or similar indexer, is the ability to tag a record with picture and sound files.

If you want a simple database the combination of solid presentation and OS friendliness makes this a very good choice. ★★★★☆

Nitefall compilation 3

CD-ROM wannabe

■ **Available from:** Online PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Liverpool L37 3PX.

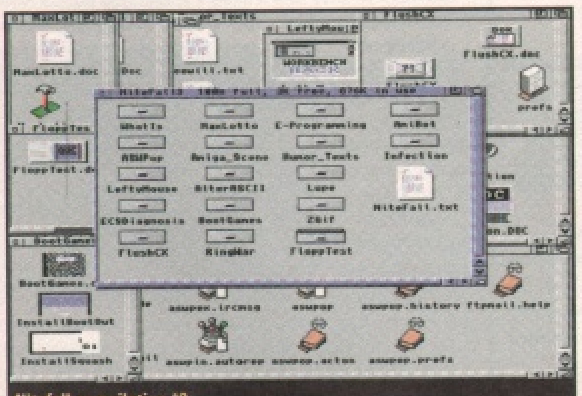
■ **Tel:** 01704 834335.

■ **Price:** 75p plus 75p P&P

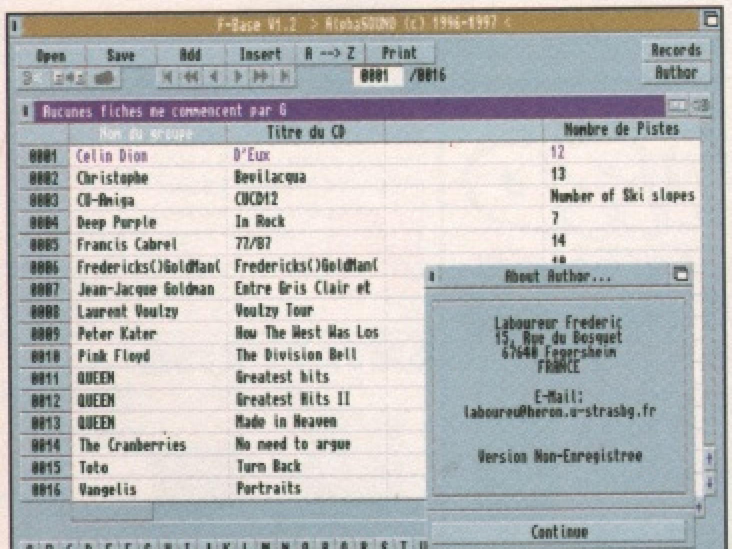
There isn't much space on a floppy disk, a mere 880k. Hardly enough room for a single program, let alone an anthology of software. Let's be serious here. A CD-ROM has enough space on it for 700 or so floppies on it, so you can expect CD-ROMs to have lots of great little bits and pieces on it, sure, but not a floppy disk.

Wait a minute, what am I saying? I remember the day when I first got my hands on a floppy drive. You could store a whole 170K on one of those disks, enough for dozens of pieces of software. We could get by on a single floppy disk for years, we could. I used to be oop at 5 o'clock in t'morning, going down t'pit... The point being of course that not everything takes up 100s of K and if you are careful you can put together a disk that is full of bits and pieces in the same way a CD-ROM can be.

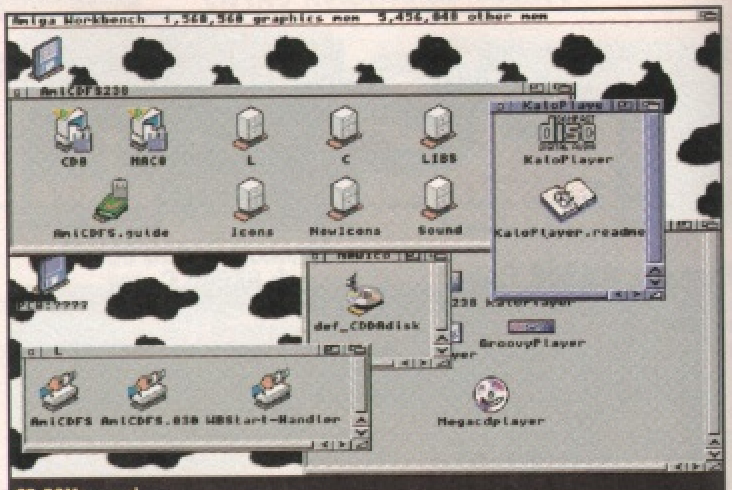
Many people may argue that while a CU cover CD might have a 7Mb demo of the latest Doom clone, this one has a tiny game that can fit in the boot block of a disk, but the point still holds. From humorous texts to Workbench hacks, there is plenty in here that will ultimately keep you amused. Granted, there's not much of any lasting use, but exploring it is certainly plenty of fun. ★★★★☆



Nitefall compilation *3



F-base



CD-ROM wannabe

My World Paint

Paint package

■ **Available from:** PD Power, 15 Lovetot Avenue, Aston, Sheffield, S26 2BQ

■ **Tel:** 01374 150972.

■ **Price:** 50p per disk & 75p P&P.

While most PD paint packages seem to be aimed at kids, this one is clearly intended as a rival to DPaint and Ppaint.

On booting up, you are presented with a blank screen with a toolbar on it. Apart from the fact that the toolbar is horizontal rather than vertical, it will be familiar to anyone who has used an Amiga paint package before.

As with most PD/shareware paint packages, the airbrush is worse than useless, the spray bounded by a very obvious square, but other than that everything actually seems to work quite well. The zoom function is a little weird, as it doesn't zoom the brush at all, and allows the artist to draw at screen resolution over the pixel boundaries, but the conversion down to actual size when the zoom is removed seems to work reasonably well.

What is wrong with this package is that despite the author's claim that this fulfils the need for a cheap Amiga paint package, the £6 registration fee puts it at about the price Dpaint4 goes for these days, and make no mistake, this program is a long way from matching Dpaint 4. ★★☆☆☆



My World Paint

AMICDFS V2.38

CD-ROM Filesystem

■ **Available from:** Online PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX.

■ **Tel:** 01704 834335.

■ **Price:** 75p plus 75p P&P.

I like AMICDFS. It works. Unlike certain other CD file systems which don't – like the the Commodore CD file system. AMICDFS actually works which means that it doesn't fall over parts of the CD standard, such as Rockridge extensions. If you had problems with CUCD10 or Epic Encyclopaedia '97, it is because the CD file system you use is incomplete, and AMICDFS could be just the trick for you. With this system, Amiga or PC ISO9660 discs will read properly, as indeed will Macintosh HFS, even in dual format.

AMICDFS's drawback is that it must be installed by hand. Follow the instructions carefully and you should have no problems – remember to edit the CD0 file to suit your set-up – Squirrel users should usually change the "unit number" field to 3, for instance, and the "device" field isn't always SCSI.DEVICE.
Although a program such as SCSIsniffer can be used to locate this, users of an old system can always check on their old mountlist. Regardless of this minor gripe, AMIDCFS V2.38 remains a fine product. ★★★★☆

CD-ROM Scene

Bags of choice here from space, games or cartoons, to the ubiquitous yet traditional gigabyte from the Aminet.





★★★★★	**Totally blinding**
★★★★☆	**Good**
★★★☆☆	**Average**
★★☆☆☆	**Substandard**
★☆☆☆☆	**Oh dear**

Eric Schwartz Productions Archive

■ **Available from:** Weird Science Ltd, 1 Rowlandson Close, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 2SE.

■ **Tel:** 0116 2340682.

■ **Price:** £19.95 plus £1 P&P

You've read the interview on page 34? If not, you've probably seen a sample or two of his work before – even if you don't have this month's CD. Eric Schwartz, eh? You just can't get away from him. Eric hit the Amiga scene early in the decade and has been a fixture since with his Warner style cartoons becoming something of a symbol for the Amiga. On this disc you will find nearly the entire repertoire of Schwartz furry animal pics and anims, the notable exceptions being his Pogo and Roadrunner anims which are sadly excluded for copyright reasons.

All of the animations on the disc work in a very satisfactory click to operate sort of way, assuming you have the memory to run them. The still pictures are all here in a variety of formats to please owners of OCS or AGA machines, as well as in 24 bit for those lucky Amigans with true colour displays. All the picture icons are thumbnails of the full image, a nice idea but alas one which rarely works too well. The supplied setup script attempts to reset the palette and grab the Workbench pens necessary for displaying the icons properly. It doesn't seem to work brilliantly and can fall over badly on a NewIcons system leaving you with a rather garish mess.

Do you want this disc? That's easy. If you like Schwarz's work, then the answer is a simple yes. If you don't like Schwarz you'd be wasting your money. If you don't know Schwarz's work, then you really do owe it to yourself to check out the samples on our CD and decide if he really is one of the leading lights in Amiga animation. ★★★★☆



Eric Schwartz Productions Archive

Aminet 18

■ **Available from:** Weird Science Ltd, 1 Rowlandson Close, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 2SE.

■ **Tel:** 0116 2340682.

■ **Price:** £14.95 plus £1 P&P

It is getting increasingly difficult to review these things without getting a bit repetitive. As usual, for your paltry investment you get a gigabyte of archives from the latest and greatest code to have been uploaded onto the Aminet. The traditional back cover breakdown shows that this disc has a real

AMIGA SUPERSTAR


Aminet 18

emphasis on fun, with 104Mb in the games directory, 136 in the demos directory, 225 in the mods directory and 224 in the graphics directory. As a bonus the compilers have arranged for the brilliant Xtreme Racing to be included. This game came fourth in our recent '50 Best Amiga Games Ever' feature, and is easily worth the price of the disc on it's own if you are in to racing games.

Serious users should not feel left out either, as although this isn't a particularly rich utilities disc, there are still plenty of utilities there. It's getting to be fairly common to give Aminet discs a screenstar award – this one is earned for the entertainment value. ★★★★★

Assassins 3

■ **Available from:** Weird Science Ltd, 1 Rowlandson Close, Leicester, LE4 2SE.

■ **Tel:** 0116 2340682.

■ **Price:** £19.95 plus £1 P&P



Firstly, this CD is stacked high with trash. No surprises there from a disc of this type – as there are hundreds of games from the world of shareware and PD here. It would be a miracle if they were all good.

The fact is that for every gem here, there are two games which are quite good, four which are OK for an hour and five which are unplayable. This is the nature of the beast. however, should you buy the CD or just go on using a PD library and live in hope?

The compilers have included a front end to select games which is quite simply excellent. The menu system is joystick operated, so you can just stick the CD, hit the ASI_MENU icon, pick up your joystick and you can almost forget that you are using a computer and not a games console (setting aside the quality of the games, that is).

All of the games are divided into categories to give you some idea of what you are letting yourself in for. Once you have scanned down the titles in a list that interests you, you click on the game of your choice and are presented with a screen which tells you the hardware requirements and offers you the choice of running the game or going back to the menu screen to look for something else. In an ideal world you could hover around this menu system trying games and being dumped back to it when you got bored and quit them, but in reality far too many of these games don't bother with a quit function. This is not the fault of the CD, of course.Go back to the Workbench and you will find further wonders.

The Extra_memory_needed drawer is where many will spend most of their time, with such gems as the original Genetic Species demo, the brilliant Space Taxi 3 and the Wheels on Fire demo. There is also a drawer of commercial demos including Worms, AB3D, Capital Punishment, Valhalla 3 and more. And of course, what disc could be complete without a huge collection of levels for Boulderdash, XTR, Worms, Skidmarks and so on, not to mention editors for SWOS, AB3D and others.

This disc represents a huge resource for all gamers. Buy it, it's excellent. ★★★★★

Views of the Solar System

■ **Available from:** National Science Teachers Association, 1840 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201-3000, USA

■ **Tel:** (+1) 703 243 7100

■ **Price:** US $21.95 plus P&P $6 for US addresses, $16 for overseas

First a warning. This is not an Amiga CD-ROM. However, as this CD-ROM holds a massive information database in HTML (web page) format and complies to ISO9660 standards, there is no problem running it on a CD-ROM equipped Amiga, just so long as you have a web browser and a reasonably up to date file system installed.

The disc comes with Adobe acrobat and Internet Explorer, so you can use it on a PC, a Mac or a ShapeShifter based Amiga, or you can use it with your own Amiga browser. I used Ibrowse with AVId selected as an external viewer for the AVI animations and the whole thing worked very nicely indeed.

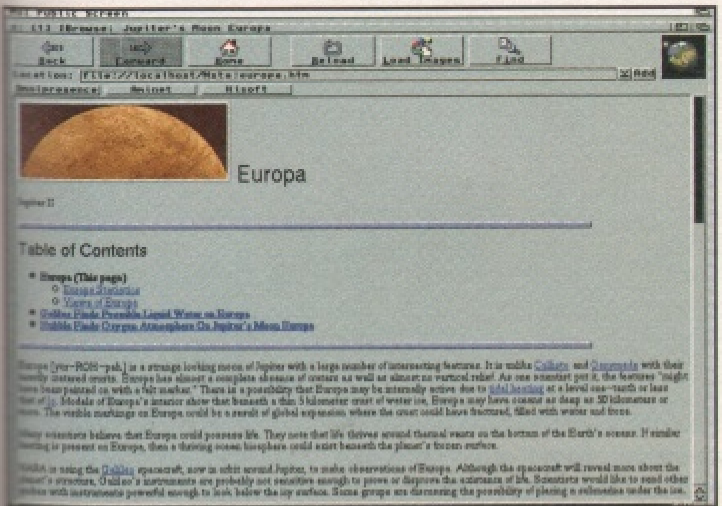
Views of the Solar System is published by the American National Science Teachers Association and is designed as a classroom resource, although it would be equally at home in the collection of anyone with a passing interest in Astronomy. The disc fires off from an index page (you will have to point your browser at this, as with all similar things, it is called index.html). From here you can navigate your way around the masses of information grouped by subject.

There are pages covering all the planetary bodies as well as most of the major phenomena of the solar system from the Kuiper belt to the solar wind. There is a section covering the alleged "face on Mars" which could be an easy way in for students who don't immediately see the attraction of this kind of study. Each subject has a comprehensive text, written in a scientific but very accessible manner – no problem for anyone from secondary school up. Diagrams are plentiful and useful to show just how elliptic the orbits of long period comets actually are. Also, each major body has a comprehensive table of facts and figures covering everything from planetary mass to orbital eccentricity.



Perhaps the richest resource on the disc is the mass of images. It is impressive that they cover not only the obvious, attention grabbing Pioneer photos of swirling Jovian cloudscapes, but also the vague black and white blobs, which represent the most distant objects in our solar system. Along with the still images are a good selection of animations in AVI format, so if you want to really get an understanding of what Saturn's rings are all about, you can watch them rotating. One note of caution here as some of these AVI files are HUGE, so don't expect to view them all unless you have lots of memory.

Presentation of the HTML pages is unfortunately a little bland. I would have liked to see a background colour selected at the very least. While the kind of flashy presentation and neat animGIF trickery that makes so many web sites special would not be wholly appropriate for what is meant as an educational product, I feel that it could have been better. With no current UK distribution, the NSTA will ship to overseas customers for a $16 shipping charge. Including this charge the disc will cost a UK purchaser around £25 at today's prices, hardly expensive for such a comprehensive reference work. ★★★★☆



Views of the Solar System

Art Gallery

You can send your artwork to us at Art Gallery, CU Amiga, 37-39 Mill Harbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ.

Yoda by Colin Thomson



Colin has adopted a very traditional approach to this image. Originally sketched in outline, the colour was filled in and details worked onto the image. One advantage of computer art is how easy changing colours is.

Abduction by James Mellers



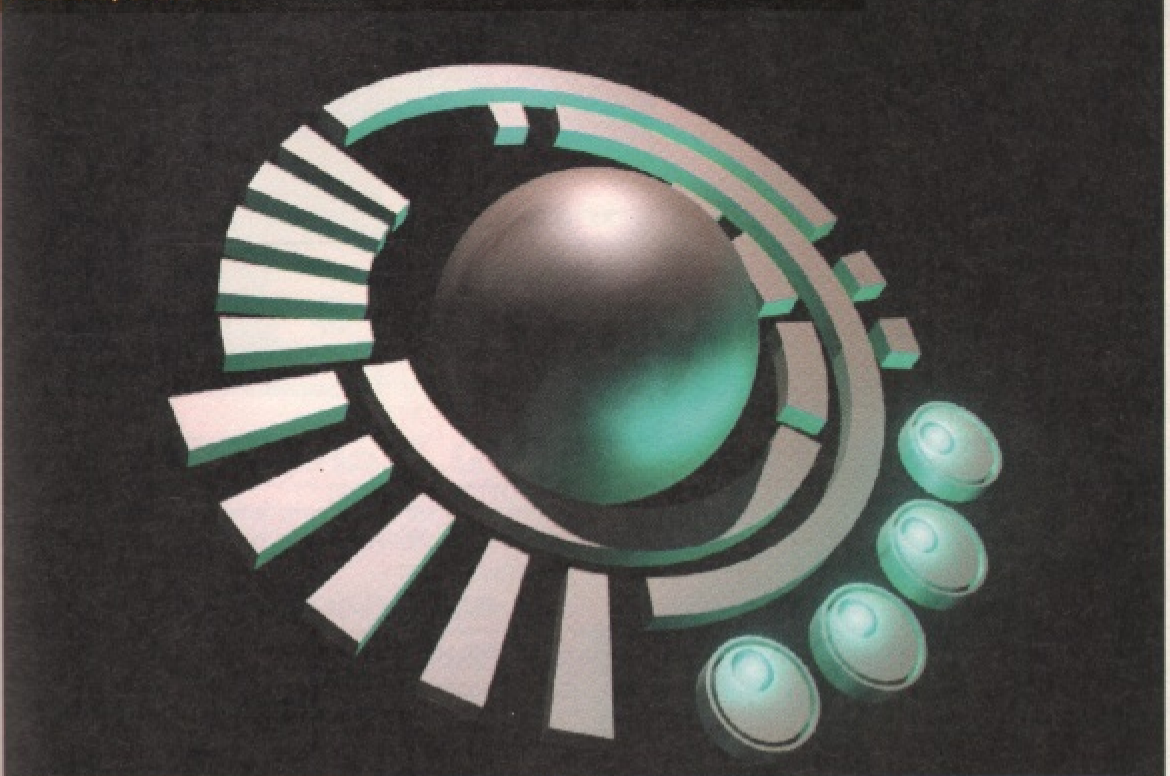
The X-files may have made this thing popular but the imagery is much older – for grey aliens read demons. Check out the 18th century painter Henri Fuselli....

Dog-fight by Robbie Hall



This image highlights the difficulty of integrating hand drawn and fractal images. Using anti aliasing or a low level of noise filtering on the hand drawn elements helps.

Artefact by Girish Nath



Done in Lightwave 3.5 this is unusually engaging. The skewed Z axis gives it a very sculptural feel. Sadly the texture contrast between the sphere and ring causes the sphere to be so well lit while the ring becomes a bit washed out.

India by Girish Nath



I've seen this on Aminet – it's great. Image composited with photogenics and touched up with brilliance.

UFO by James Mellers



UFOs were rendered using Imagine, and modified with DPaintIV and Photogenics. This stands out from similar images due to the excellent use of a limited palette and the strong composition. The angles of the UFOs follows a rule of composition popular with followers of European romantic art and reminds me of the works of John Martin and Caspar David Friedrich.

and

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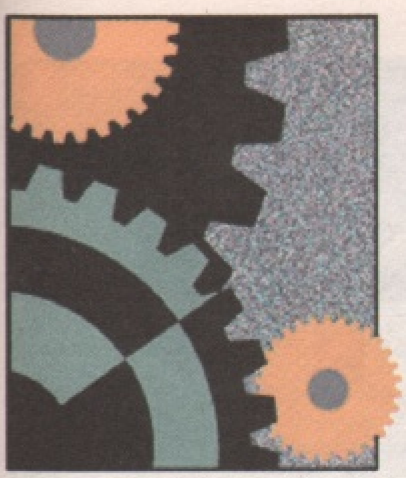
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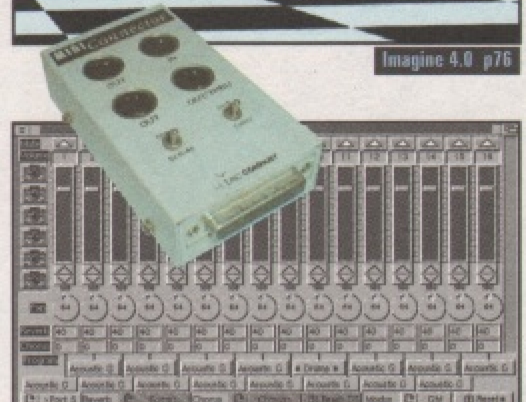
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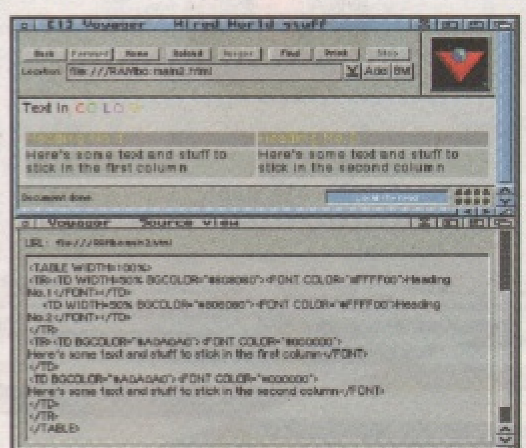
Workshop will improve your Amiga knowledge by; showing you how, giving away the trade secrets and talking in depth about all things Amiga.



Imagine 4.0 p76



Sound Lab p84



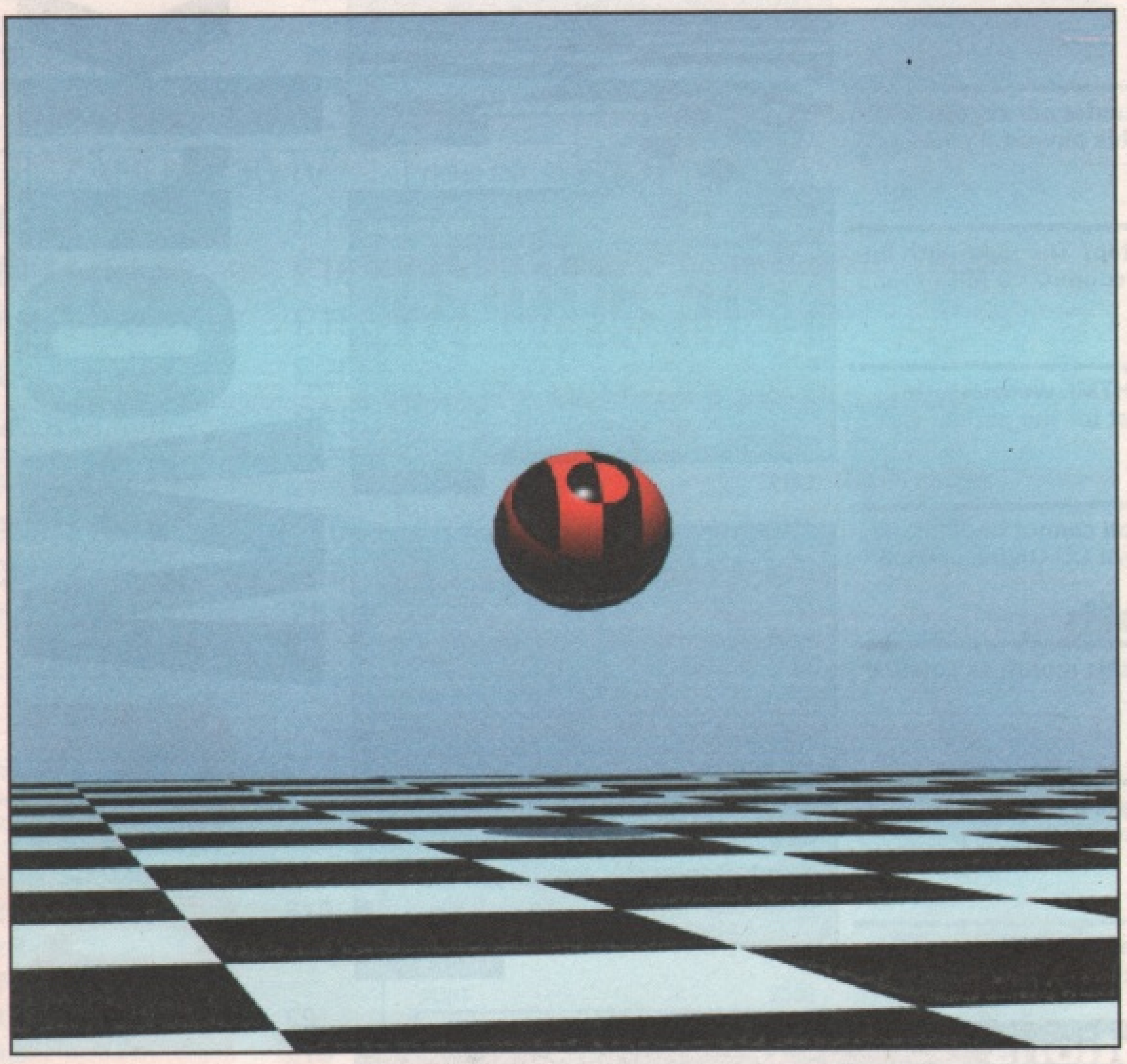
Wired World p86

Regulars

Imagine 4.0

PART 7

Animation trade secrets this month: all you need to know to render realistic object and camera motion with your favourite rendering program.



Creating animations with Imagine is terrific fun, but it can also be a little daunting to know how to start. This month we'll examine, in some detail, how to create an animation of a bouncing ball. This will involve making the ball move in quite a complicated manner, and so it is worth experimenting with this project to see how it all works.

When completed, you should understand how to create you own animations that feature your own objects.

Bouncy bouncy

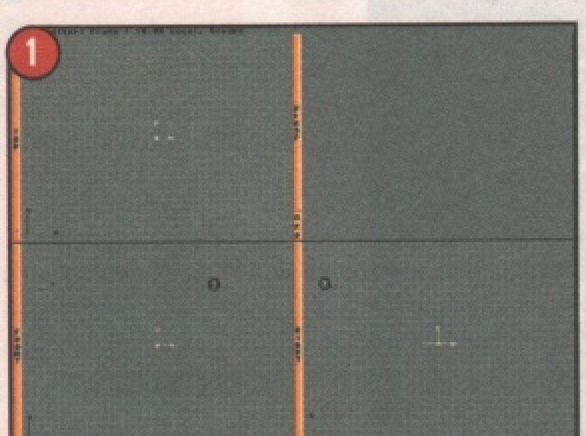
To make the ball move in a realistic way, we are going to forsake the simplest "Tweening" feature (which automatically moves an object between a start and end position) and instead use Imagine's Path Following abilities.

Paths are created from the Object/Add menu from the Stage Editor (why not the Detail Editor? I don't know). A path can be "open" or "closed". An open path is like a curve or a line – there is no join. A closed path is like an orbit, in that the path will end up back at the start. If you want your objects to follow the same path over and over, then pick closed. In this example, we'll create an open path. See pic 1.

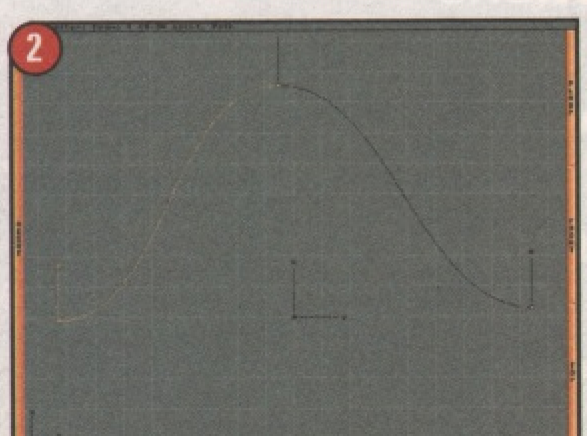
Make sure the path is selected, and use the Mode Menu to toggle between Group and Path editing. When you switch to Path Edit, notice that the Path Menu is now active. Now select both end points of the curve (hold down shift to select them both) and select "Split Segment" from the path menu. This will insert a new point half-way between the two selected points. This point can then be dragged upwards (in the Right View) to produce a curve. You may need to move the end points to the left and right a little bit in case you create a loop rather than a curve. See pic 2.

Although a very pretty bell-shaped curve,

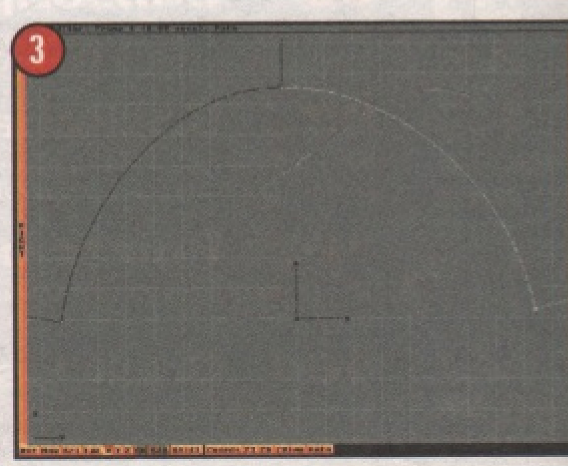
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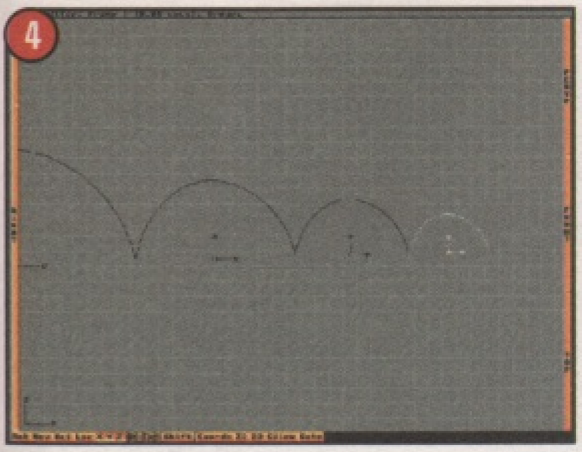


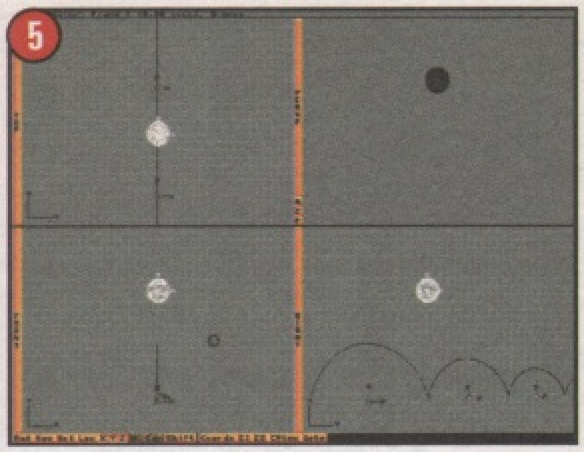
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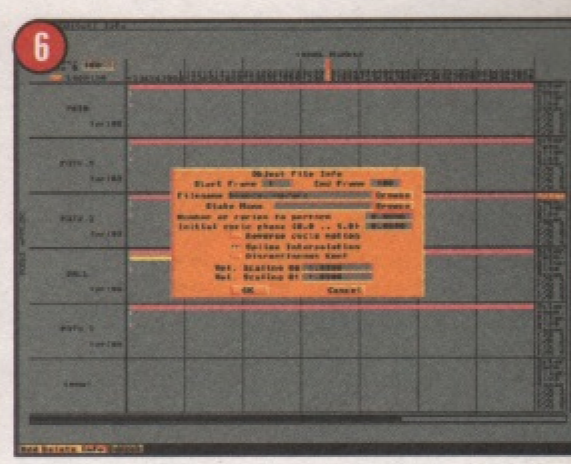


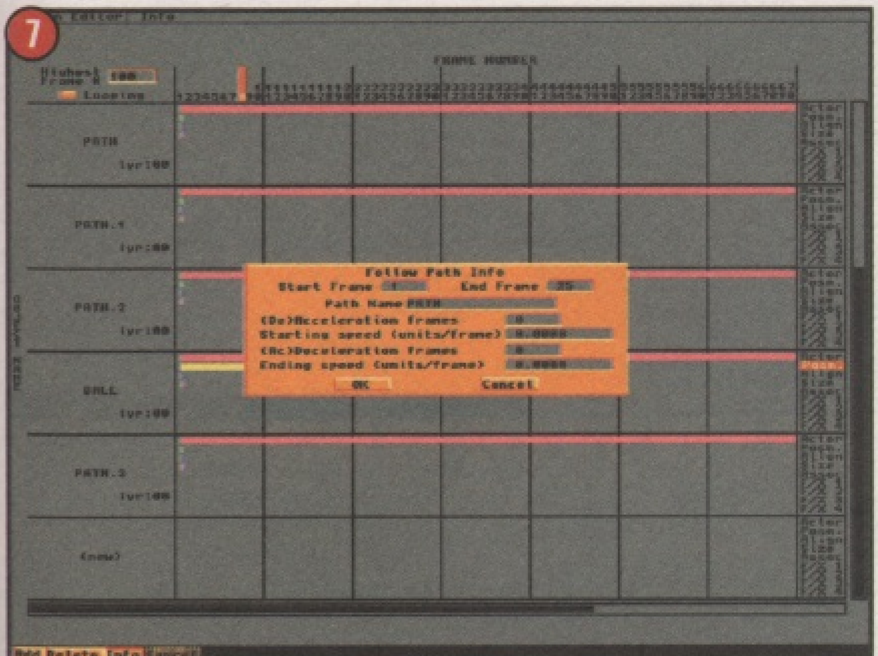
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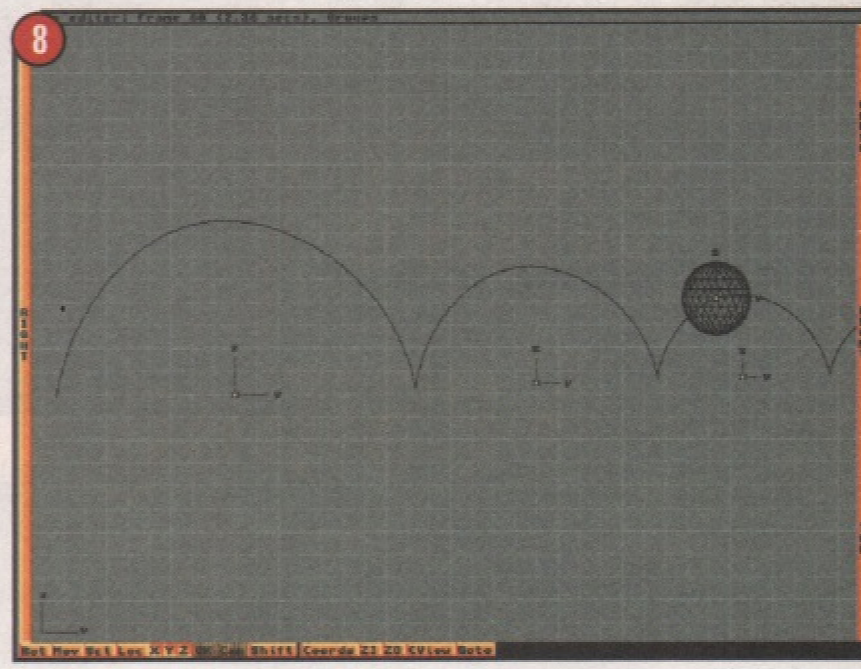












this isn't the path we want. So select the end points, and rotate them in the X axis. The curve will change shape and you'll be left with this arc. This looks pretty much like the path which a bouncing ball would take. Make sure you save it. See pic 3.

Let's give our ball a slightly more interesting path. Still in the Stage Editor, make sure the path is selected and use "Clone" from the Object Menu. This duplicates the path. Now scale it slightly, and move it to the side so that it matches up. Repeat this process until you have four paths, each slightly smaller than the others, laid end-to-end. See pic 4.

Now let's create something to bounce. Nothing too fancy to start with, so Save Changes and hop to the Detail Editor. Create a Sphere object there, name it, and save it. This time, do NOT create a perfect sphere. Instead, use the Add/Primitive Sphere. The reason for this will be apparent soon enough. Return to the Stage Editor and load the Ball object. It doesn't matter where it is positioned at the moment. Save the changes and move to the Action Editor. See pic 5.

The first thing you should do now is to set the number of frames to 100. Next, go through all the path objects and the ball and make their end frame 100 instead of 1. To do this, click on the top, reddish blob (the Actor timeline) and change the values. See pic 6.

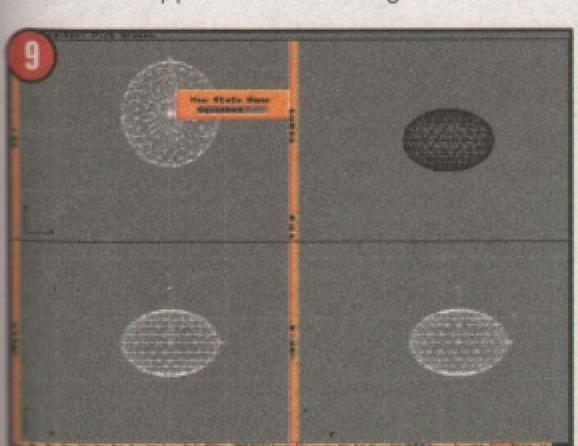
Now for the clever part. With the "Delete" button selected (bottom left) click in the Ball object's position timeline to remove it. Now click on "Add" and click again. You'll be asked to select between following a path or tweening position: select the path. You can now adjust the stop and start frames, and enter the name of the path. See pic 7.

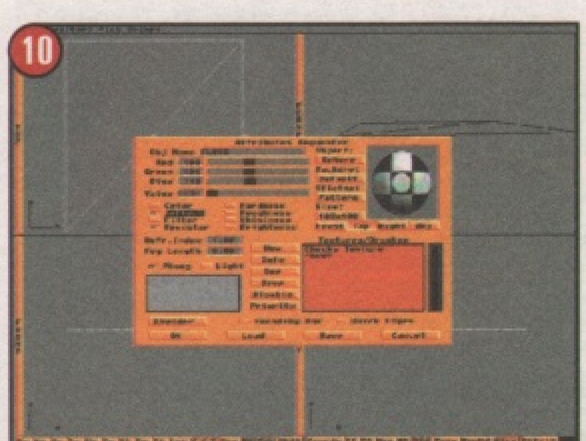
You should be able to work out what to do next. Add four position timelines, and set each one to follow a different path. So for frames 1 to 25, the ball will follow the first path. Then, from frames 26 to 50 it will follow the second path. Repeat for all four paths. Save changes and return to the stage editor to preview your bouncing animation. See pic 8.

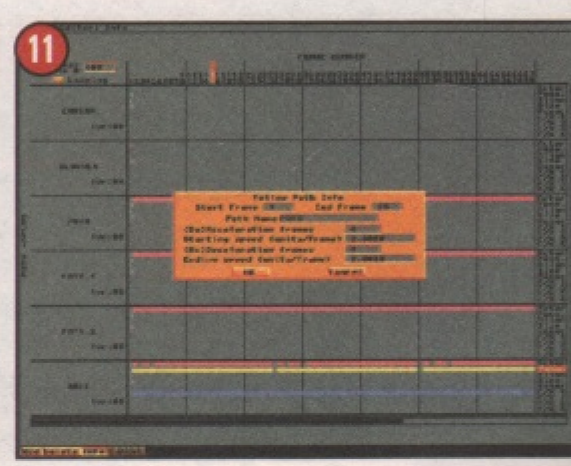
Let's play with the shape of the ball. Go to the Detail Editor, and load in the ball. Create a new state called "Normal" and make sure the Shape attribute is selected. Now use Scale, in the Z axis only, to squash the ball slightly. Make another state, called "Squashed", and then re-save the Ball. This is why we couldn't use a perfect sphere, as it would not deform.

Back in the Action Editor, delete the Ball's Actor timeline and insert some new ones. This takes a little experimentation, as you will need to make the ball squash almost immediately on impact and then return to normal as it rises. See pic 9.

With the ball motion perfected, you can add a floor for the ball to bounce on. The easiest



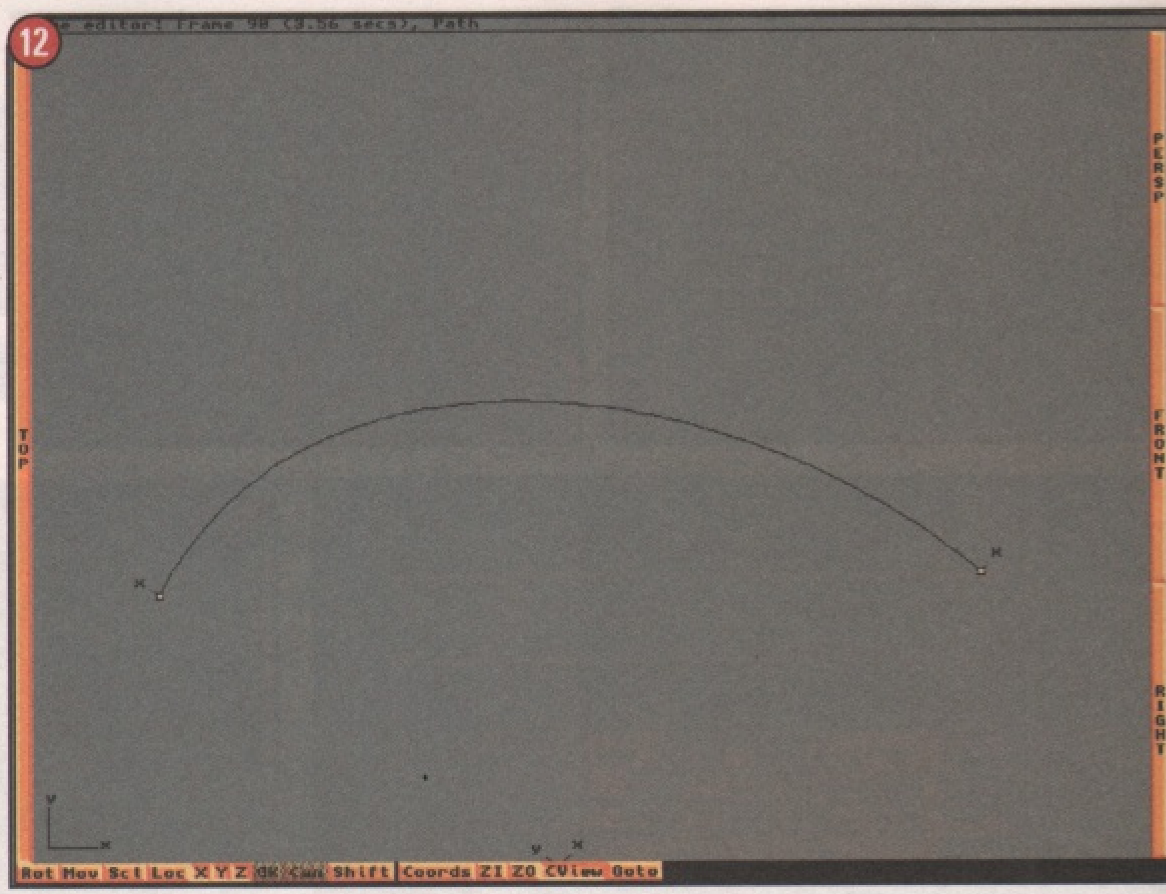




Continued overleaf ▶▶▶

way to do this is to create a rectangular plane and apply a chequered texture in the time-honoured tradition. For best results the floor should be ever so slightly reflective. Yes, this takes ages to render, but it makes the ball's motion look much more realistic. If you have a fast machine, using shadows will help too, as they also help the brain tell when the ball is about to touch the floor. See pic 10.

There is still plenty of fine-tuning to perform. The ball should be spinning slightly as it bounces along, so apply the Rotate20 special effect to it (you'll need to apply a texture or brushmap so you will know if the ball is actually moving). However, the biggest improvement which can be made is to adjust the rate at which the ball moves. As you know, when a ball bounces, it travels fastest at the bottom of each curve, and slowest at the top of the curve (at least in the vertical direction). You can adjust this from the Action Editor using the (De) Acceleration settings. See pic 11.



Lights, camera, action

Before rendering your animation, you will need to play with the lighting. I added a single light-source quite high in the sky, and also increased the ambient lighting to about 10 units of each colour. Adjusting the backdrop colour will give a pretty graduated effect which is hard to create in any other way. If you have a fast Amiga, adding fog will create a good impression of depth.

The last stage in this project is to animate the camera, as keeping it placed in the one spot will fail to show off the animation to its best effect. To change the position of the camera we could simply let it tween through two positions: you could make it track alongside the bouncing ball for example.

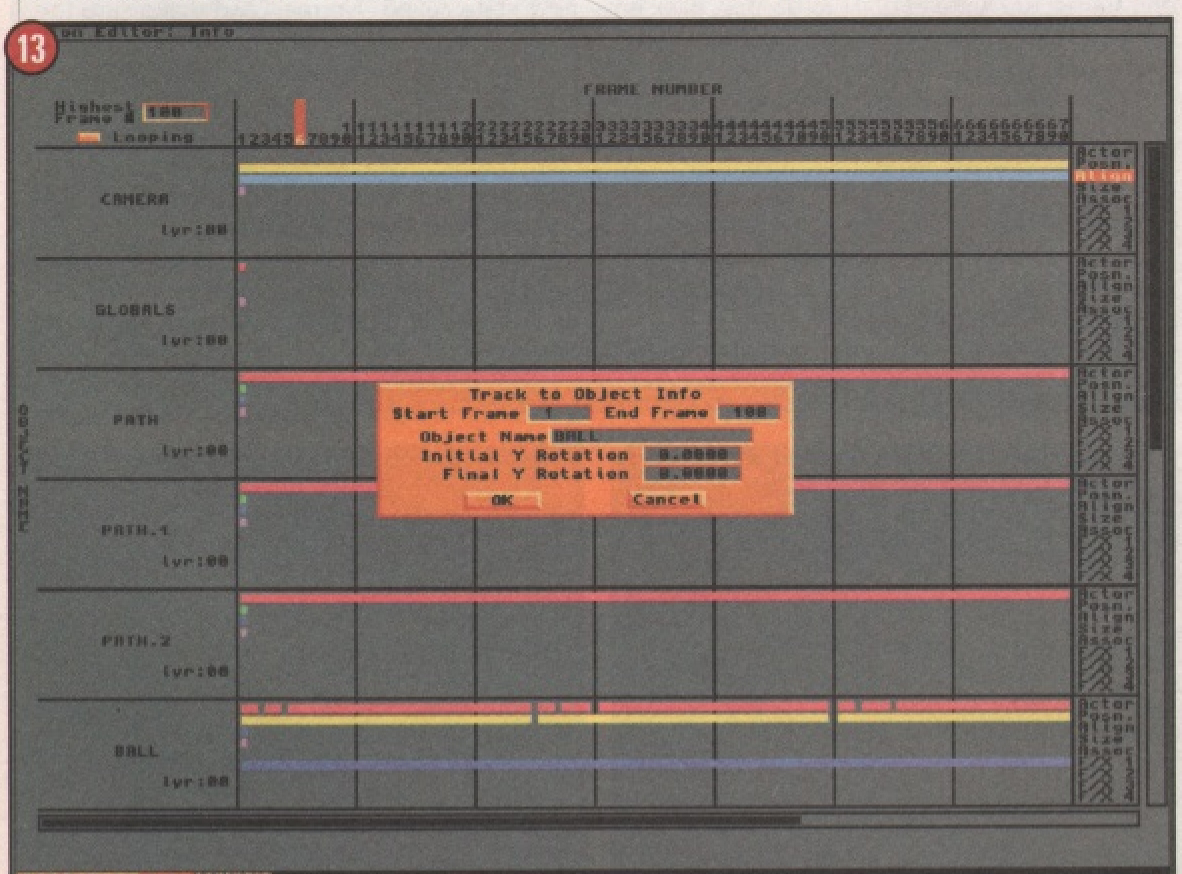
However, let's stick with the path concept, and create a sweeping arc which the camera can follow. This creates a very pleasant effect, as it's often used in the "real world" with real cameras. All you need to do is return to the Stage Editor and create another Open Path. This time the two end points will suffice, so move them around and rotate them until you have a nice curve. See pic 12.

In the Action Editor, delete the camera's position timeline and add a new one, which follows the new path. You will also have to delete and add a new alignment setting. Here you have an interesting choice: you can either choose to have the camera locked to the ball (and so the ball will remain central in the screen as it moves) or lock the camera to another object – even an invisible axis specially created for the purpose. Again, this is one of those situations where you will just simply need to experiment in order to achieve the best results. See pic 13.

It's a wrap!

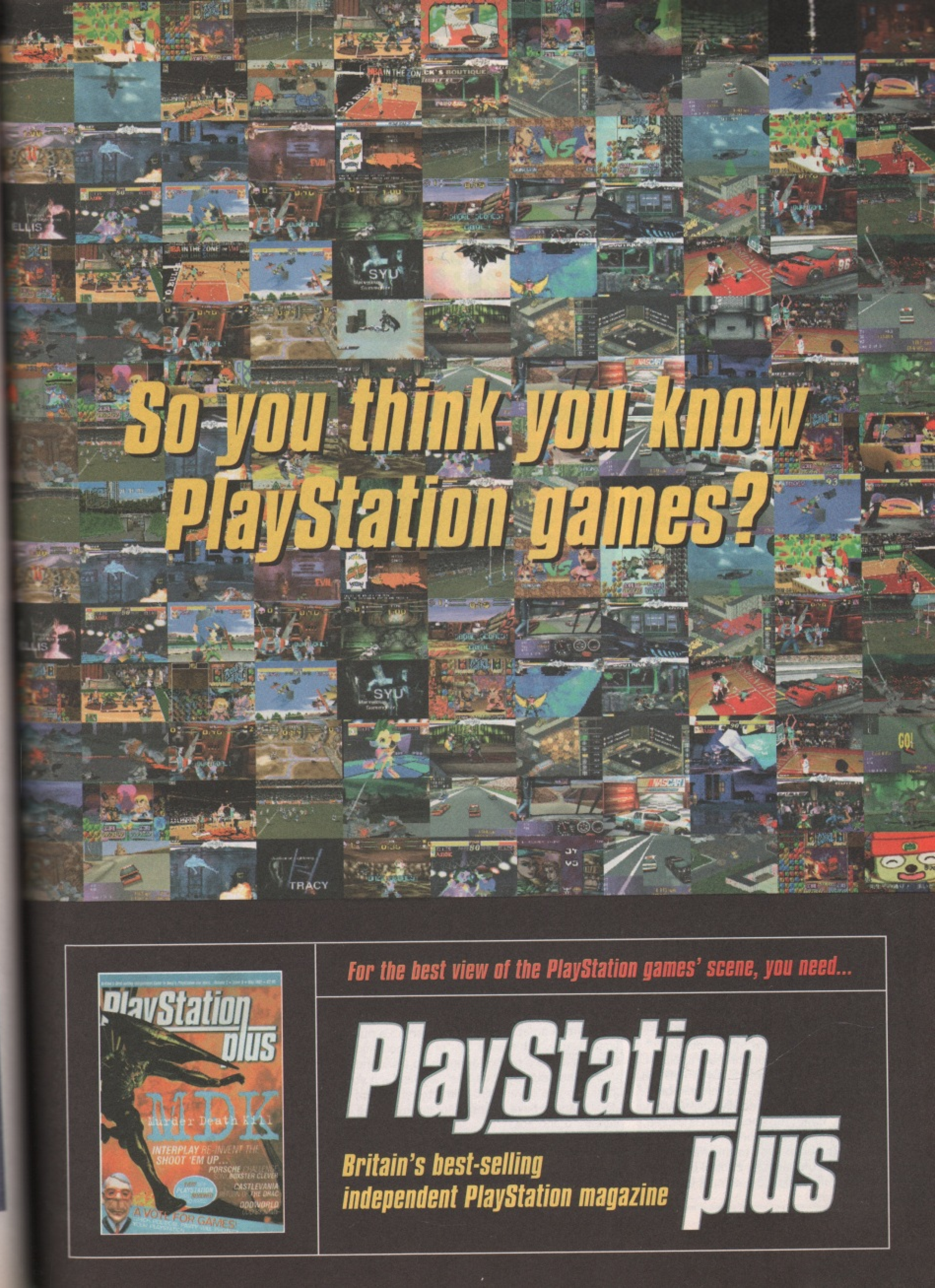
And that's all we have time for this month. Our animation demonstrates several important concepts, and you should be able to adapt them to suit you own requirements. Remember though that rendering in Trace mode (necessary for shadows) is not always essential – and when you are creating an animation containing a thousand frames or so you want to keep each frame render down to as short a time as possible.■

John Kennedy



Animation Effects

When rendering an animation you will need to have a large number of options at your disposal with regard to the way in which the camera works. Watch a film or television program to pick out the different ways the professionals do it. In one case, the camera might remain steady as an object moves past. In another, the camera might remain in the same place but pan left to right following the object. Or the camera might keep the object in the centre of the screen. Or you might see the view from the perspective of the moving object... the list is endless, but Imagine can perform all these with ease. Remember that the camera can be treated like any other object and will follow paths, tween positions and cut from one location to another. By making effective use of the camera, you will ultimately be sure to make your animation stand out.



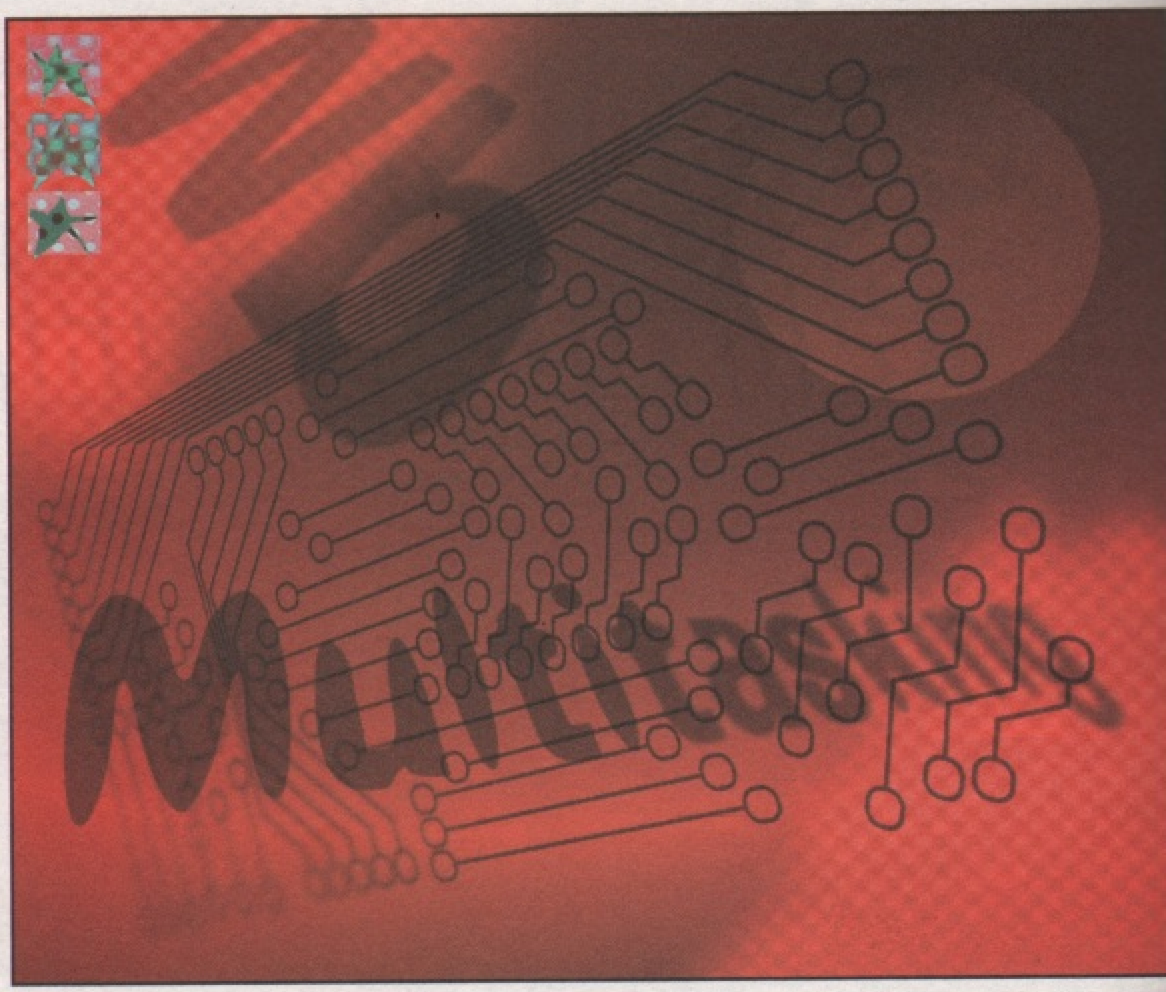
So you think you know PlayStation games?
For the best view of the PlayStation games' scene, you need...
PlayStation plus
Britain's best-selling independent PlayStation magazine
PlayStation plus
MDK
Murder Death Kill
INTERPLAY RE-INVENT THE SHOOT 'EM UP...
PORSCHE
CASTLEVANIA
ODDWORLD
A VOTE FOR GAMES!

Masterclass

Workbench Tricks

Think that you've got Workbench working as fast as it can? Wrong...

The Amiga Operating System is a flexible and powerful beast, combining the best of both worlds with it's unique Graphical User Interface (Workbench) and Command Line Interface (the shell). In order to make both easier and quicker to use, there are many little key-presses and tricks you can use. This month we'll take a look at some of the most useful. Although by no means an exhaustive look, it will be a dedicated Amiga user indeed who doesn't learn at least something!



Selecting icons

Use a few keys to make Workbench just that little bit quicker. This is especially true when dealing with icons. Remember, all files can be made to appear as icons by using "Show.. All files" from the Workbench Windows menu.

General tips

- Drag the mouse pointer whilst holding the left mouse button down to draw out a "marquee" highlighting several icons at once.
- Hold down the Shift key when moving icons (left mouse button held down, mouse dragged) to keep all the highlighted icons moving, not just the one which you first select.
- Press Right Amiga and A to quickly select all icons in the active window. You can even drag an entire floppy disk onto a hard drive. This creates a directory with the same name as the floppy disk, and duplicates the contents.

Multitasking

As you know, the Amiga is a totally multitasking computer and this means it can run many applications at once. The way in which the applications are displayed varies: you can sometimes select the mode yourself. Here follows a simple summary of the options and what they mean.

Private screen

The Amiga opens up a new screen display, and uses this display to run the new application. It's sometimes possible to switch off the original Workbench display, and this can be very useful if memory (especially Chip RAM) is at a premium. When the application is closed, it should automatically re-open the Workbench. The advantage to this method is that the application has total control over the number and definition of the colours used in the screen mode.

Workbench

The application program opens up a new window on the existing Workbench. This can be useful when using a program which interacts with the contents of the Workbench, such as a small disk utility or icon editor. The application doesn't use up memory on a new screen, but has to live with the number of colours which the Workbench is currently displaying.

Public screen

Sometimes an application will open up a public screen, which means that other applications can use it. It's a bit like opening up a second Workbench display. It can be very useful if you intend to use several programs together, and don't want to have to keep flipping from one screen to another.

If you want to know which programs your Amiga is currently running, you only need to open a shell window and enter "Status". This will produce a list of running applications. From the shell it's possible to terminate a program using the command called "Break". Break takes as arguments the program's reference number and also the manner in which you want to try and stop it. This is all to do with whether you want to send the application

Workbench Shortcuts

Here's a short list of real timesavers...

Press Right Amiga and . (full stop) to tidy up icons displayed in the active window.
Press Right Amiga and E to open up a special one-line shell for entering commands.
Press Right Amiga and K to close the current open window.
Press Right Amiga and N to create a new empty drawer.
Press Right Amiga and R to rename it, or the active icon.
Press Right Amiga and I to bring up information on the current icon.

Shell shortcuts

Ctrl A	Move to start of line
Ctrl Z	Move to end of line
Ctrl K	Delete from cursor to end of line
Ctrl U	Delete from cursor to start of line
Ctrl X	Delete entire line
Ctrl H	Delete character to the left of the cursor
Cursor Up	Move through command line history
Cursor Down	Move through command line history
Control R	Repeat command
The following may only work on enhanced Shells	
Control T	Insert Space
Control L	Clear screen
Esc C	Clear screen
Tab	Intelligently insert filename

a Control C, or a Control D message. There are other possibilities but "Break X all" covers them all: where X is the process number.

Shell skills

Here are some keyboard shortcuts to speed up your typing when at the Shell. I would recommend a freely distributable utility called "KingCon". This enhances the Shell to include a scrolling window, which means you can look back over all that has happened.

The "command line history" is the list of things which you have already typed into the Shell. If you have entered a particularly tricky command, to repeat it you only need to press cursor up and the command will reappear. You can then edit anything which needs changing before pressing return. (Only when you press return will the line be added to the history).

The Shell will try to help you out. For example, if you have already used a "cd" command, then entering "cd" and pressing "Ctrl R" will find the last occurrence. Press "Ctrl R" again for the command used before, and so on.

If you've wanted to alter the way that text is displayed in the Shell window, read on.

Using special character sequences called "Escape Codes", changes the colour and style of the text. It's very easy to do too.

For example, open a Shell window and enter the following without pressing enter:

```
echo (press space) (press ESC key)
[ 1 m (press return key)
```

You should see something like **figure 1.** Next time anything is displayed, you will notice than your Shell will have started displayed text in bold type. Here's a list of some other Escape codes you can enter to brighten up your Shell.

Shell text style control codes

ESC [0m	Reset to default text
ESC [1m	Use bold text
ESC [2m	Use bright text
ESC [3m	Use italic text
ESC [4m	Use underlined text
ESC [7m	Use inverted text
ESC [8m	Use invisible text

If totally stuck, press ESC C (return), to clear the window and reset the text styles.

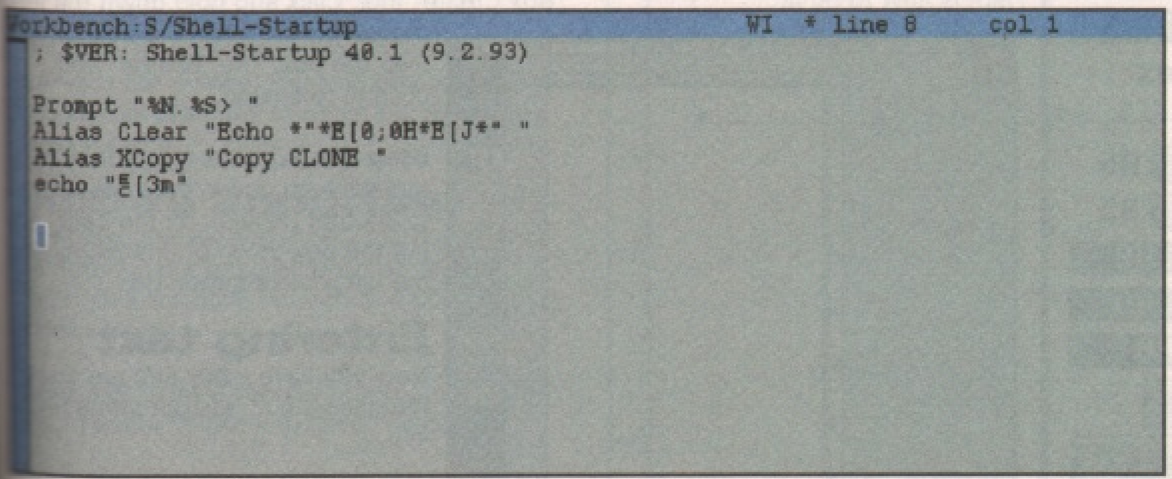
It's possible to make these text styles happen automatically every time you open a Shell. The secret is to use the shell-startup script which lives in the S: directory. This is the script which is executed every time you open a shell. Normally it's used to set the default prompt string or maybe set up a few alias commands, but you can also use it to ensure your text is always italic or bold or both.

Here you see the version of shell-startup which is on my system. As well as defining the prompt string (go on, experiment with this too!) there is an echo command which switches on the italic text. From this text editor, the escape key shows up with its own special symbol: your text editor may vary.

You can even build the escape sequence into the prompt string instead of having an extra Echo in there. ■

John Kennedy





▲ Altering the Shell-startup script to automatically mess up your text is easy!

Useful tips and tricks

1. Make sure your Workbench display isn't running in a Window as this just confuses things. Check that the Backdrop option is ticked from the Workbench menu, and use "Snapshot All" from the Window menu.
2. Install Directory Opus. Nothing makes copying and moving files, searching for particular names, viewing pictures, previewing text, checking to see how many files you can fit into one floppy, archiving, FTP access and a host of other things, simpler. Get it now.
3. Get a good text editor. Use GoldEd or EdWord or CygnusEd or anything other than the standard Ed to hack your user-startup files.
4. Get MagicWB and install it. Or NewIcons. Anything to tidy up your Workbench and make that now very 1990's blue/grey look more interesting. Remember your backdrop setting too: be bold. Be daring. Be in sixteen colours so you don't use up all your chip memory.
5. Get a hard drive. If you haven't got one, then I don't want to know you. You are bringing shame to Amiga owners everywhere.
6. Get a modem. Get on-line. Get on the Internet and make yourself heard. Forget about writing letters to those anti-Amiga losers on teletext. What do they know? They write a fictitious diary about a man with a chin for heaven's sake.
7. Get a CD-ROM drive. There is so much wondering free (or near as dammit) software out there you are daft not to make the most of it. Ah, the joys of spending a rainy Sunday afternoon exploring an Aminet CD...
8. Learn to program. All the tools you need are out there, either in the PD or on coverdisks. C, Pascal, Assembler, BASIC, Perl, ARexx – there really are dozens to choose from. Don't forget that programming is rewarding and challenging – it could get you a job!
9. Get a life. Don't spend hours arguing with your mates that your unexpanded A1200 is better than their Pentium 200MMX because it can really multitask. Instead, make the most of the Amiga's strengths: excellent professional quality image software (Imagine, Cinema4D), easy to use video-recorder friendly graphics and music composition stuff which even a tone deaf E17 fan could use.
10. Finally, don't forget that your Amiga is there for you to enjoy...



Illustration: Rank Amateurs

Desktop Publishing

Professional Page 4.1

Following last month's complete ProPage 4.1 cover mount, our regular DTP column now turns its attention to helping you get started with this powerful application.

In this month's DTP workshop I'm going to go through some of the more basic steps on how to do some of the common tasks. Things like creating a page, saving your document, creating text and so on. Do remember that these tutorials form only a few pages of the 200 or so in the full manual.

Document creation

The first thing you will need to do is to create a document.

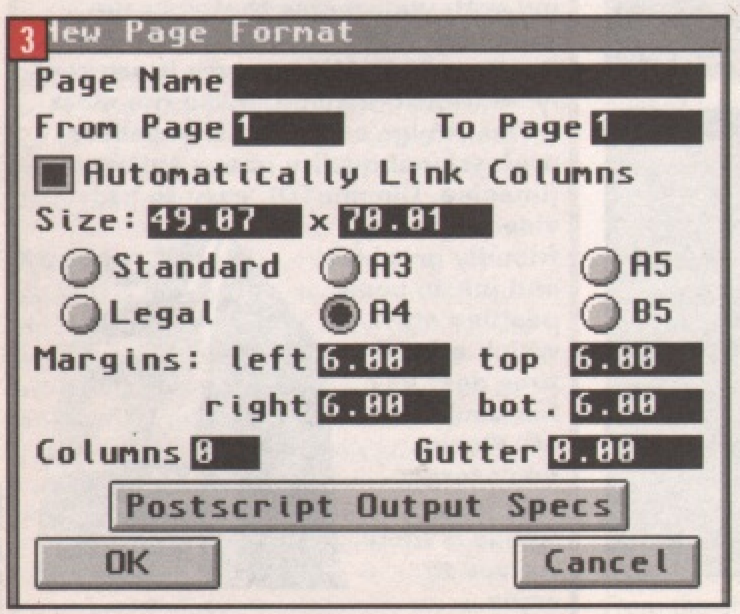
Step 1: Run ProPage by double clicking on ProPage's icon on Workbench. The program will open with no page open. The first time you run ProPage, you will be asked to select a screenmode, choose 2 colours when you do.

Step 2: To create your first document, press the right mouse button and choose the menu item, "Page/Create/From Default".

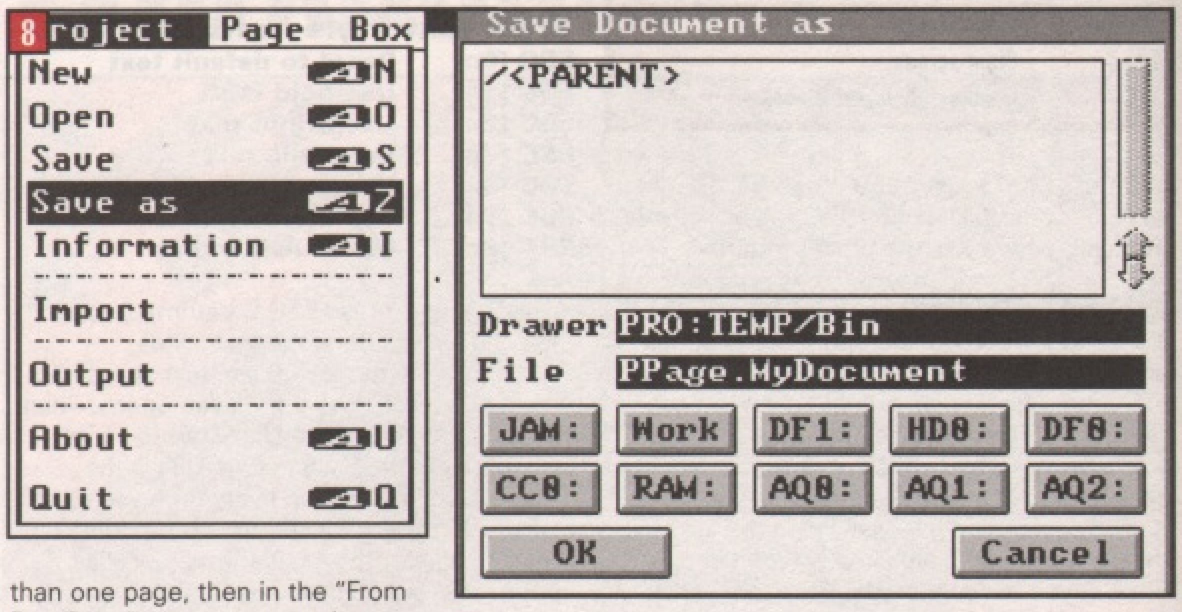
Step 3: This will open a requester labelled "New Page Format". In this requester are a number of adjustable settings.

Step 4: Multiple pages. If you want more than one page, then in the "From Page" gadget, enter a number.
Then enter the number of the last page in the document you require.

3



8



Step 5: Click on the "Automatically Link Columns" button to turn it off (on is black, white is off).

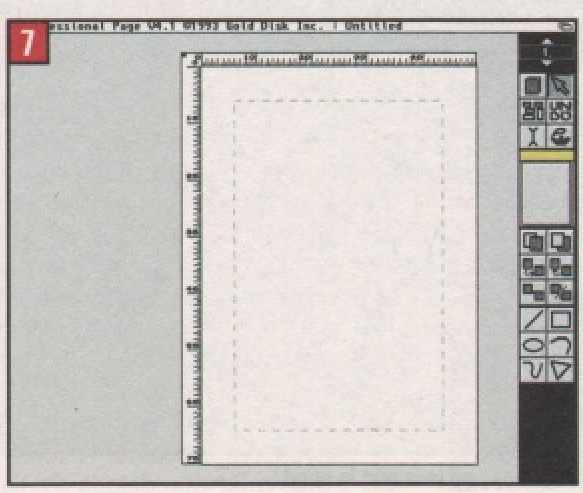
Step 6: To create a page the size you want such as A3, A4 and so on, then simply click the appropriate button.

Step 7: Click on OK to create the page. A "page" will appear on your art board. At the top of the toolbox, is the page number (page 1, in this case).

Saving docs

Once you have a document in memory, you will want to save it to disk to make sure you don't lose it. Here is how to do it.

7



Step 8: Choose "Project/Save As" and choose a drawer and a filename for your test file.

Move a box

Everything in Professional Page is based around bounding boxes. Text and graphics all need a bounding box and here is how to create one.

Step 9: Choose the "Box Create" tool from the toolbox by clicking once (left mouse button) on the appropriate icon (top left).

Step 10: To draw a box, press the left mouse to start the box and continue to hold down the left mouse button as you drag out a box. To abort the task at any stage, press Esc.

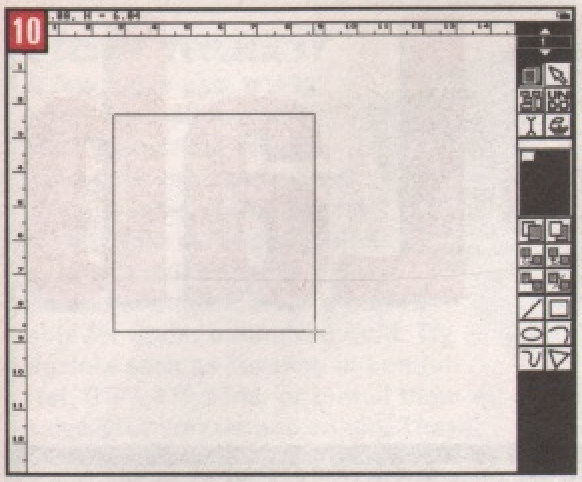
Step 11: With the box completed, click on the "Null Pointer" in the toolbox to turn off the "Box Create" tool. Click and hold down the left mouse button while the pointer is over the box. The "pointer" will change to a hand.

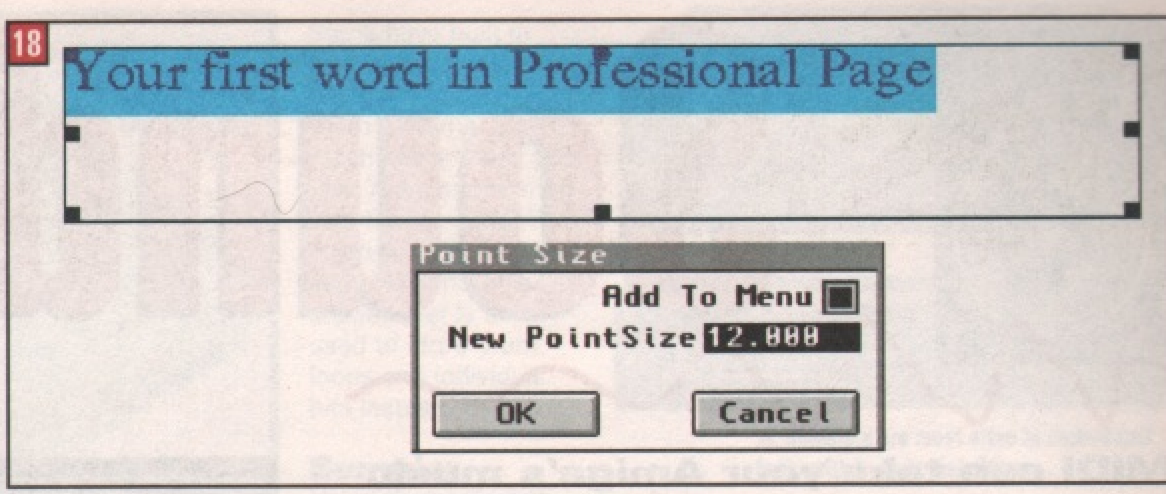
Step 12: With the left mouse button still held down, move the box to another position on the page. To put the box down on the page, let the left mouse button go.

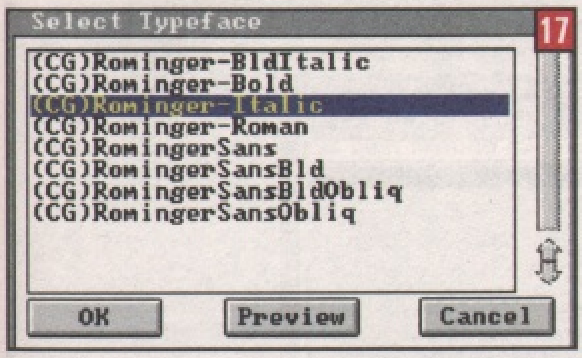
Entering text

Now you have a box and are comfortable with it, lets put some text in it.

Step 13: Click once with the left







mouse button on the "Text tool" in the toolbox. Move the pointer over the page/art board and it will change to an 'I-beam'.

Step 14: Click the left mouse button with the I-beam over the box you have drawn. Type some text. Don't worry if it comes out rather small, you can press Right Amiga-2 to magnify the page.

Text formats

You will now want to format your text using your preferred font or typeface, font size, leading and so on.

Step 15: Place the I-beam/cursor in front of the first word. You can very easily do this by by using the keyboard cursor keys.

Step 16: Hold down the left mouse button and drag the I-beam over the text.

Step 17: Choose the menu item Type/Typeface/New, or press Right Amiga-F. A requester will open showing you your available typefaces. Choose the one of your choice and then click OK.

Step 18: With the text still selected, change the size of the text using the Point Size requester (press Right Amiga-Full Stop). After typing in the number representing your point size (in this case, the number 12), and then press Return.

Picture importing

After text, the second most common task will be placing your required pictures on your page. This is simple enough, but does require a box as well.

Step 19: Draw a second box and select the "Null Pointer" when you have finished.

Step 20: Press "Right Amiga-G". This is the keyboard short-cut for the menu item Project/Import/Graphic.

Step 21: Using the file requester, choose the IFF-ILBM picture that you want to use. ProPage will import many other formats but for now, choose an IFF-ILBM. A busy pointer will appear until the image has been imported and appears on your page.

Step 22: In black and white, a dithered representation will be shown on screen. In colour mode, the picture will contain less dithering and more colour/greys.

Auto numbering

Using special codes produced by ProPage, you can insert page numbers into a text box anywhere in your document which are automatically updated if the page (or box containing the code) is moved within the document. The current date and the document creation date can also be inserted and reflect the system date of your Amiga. These codes are inserted in text by using the following keystrokes.

Step 23: To begin, draw two boxes and choose the "Text Tool". Now place the I-beam/cursor in the first box.

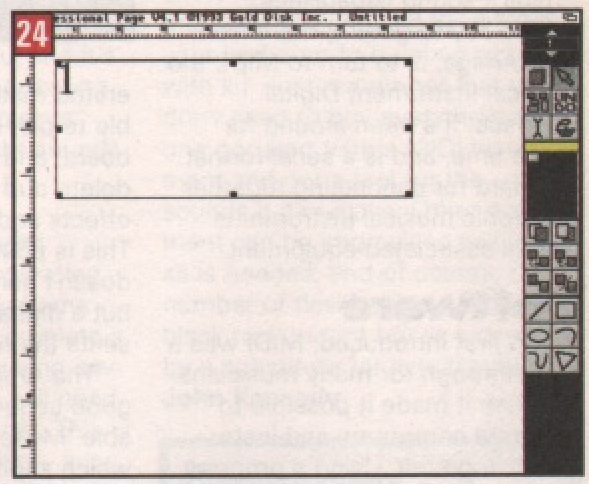
Step 24: Press CTRL-2 to insert the current Page Number. If this box is moved, copied to another page, or the page moved, the number will change.

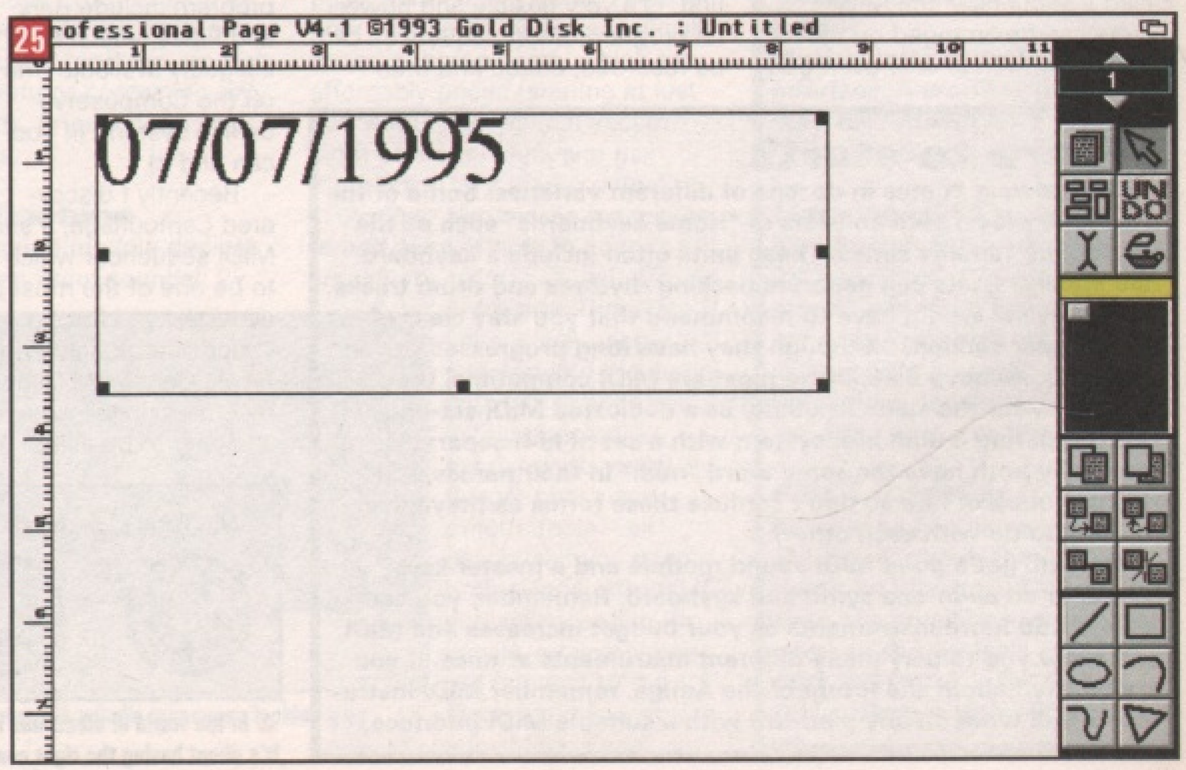
Step 25: Place the I-beam in the second box and press CTRL-5. This inserts the current date. This will be updated each time you load this document.

That's it for this month. You should now be able to get to work with Professional Page 4.1 without having to guess where and what everything is.

If you want the manual and/or a book about the program, or even some extras, call me on 01908 370 230 and we'll do our best to sort you out. ■

Larry Hickmott







Sound Lab

MIDI can take your Amiga's music one step beyond, but just what is MIDI and how can you use it?

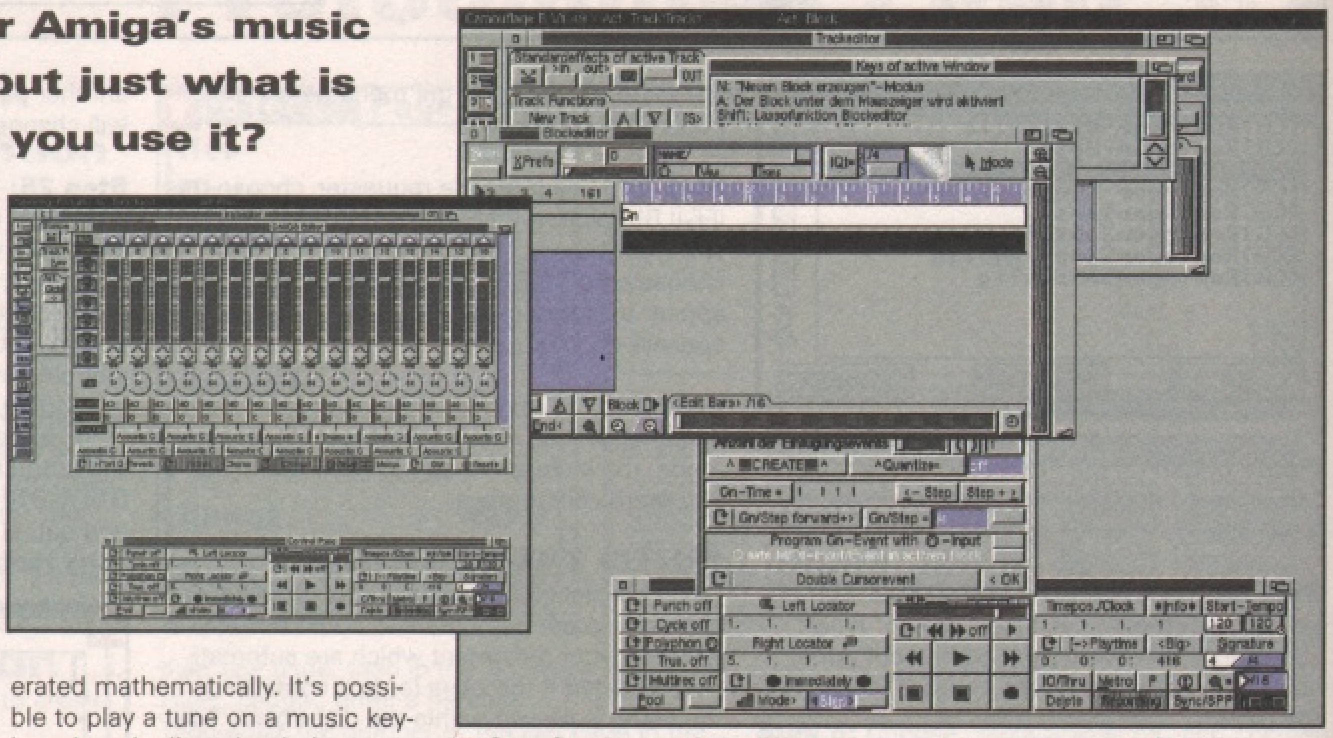
When it was first launched, the Amiga's sound generating capabilities were universally acclaimed as "totally awesome". Over time, they have been put to excellent use by games, MOD files and even speech synthesisers. However, to use the Amiga to compose music, you shouldn't be afraid to use MIDI to beef up your Amiga's sound capabilities.

The key to getting more from your Amiga, is to turn to MIDI, the Musical Instrument Digital Interface. It's been around for some time, and is a serial-format standard for connecting together electronic musical instruments and all associated equipment.

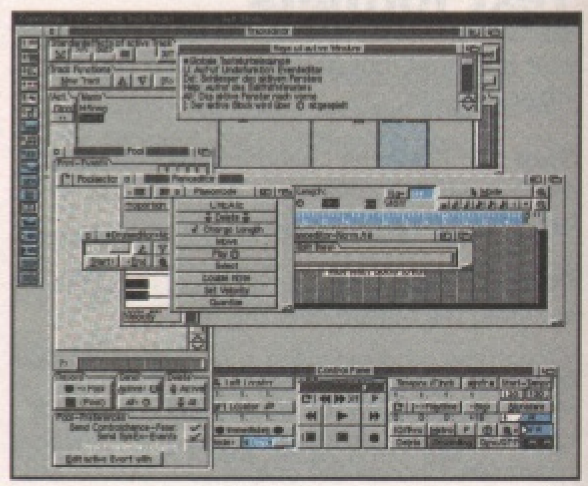
Software

When first introduced, MIDI was a breakthrough for many musicians because it made it possible to integrate computers and instruments together. Using a program called a sequencer, the MIDI events can be arranged on the screen, saved to disk or even generated mathematically. It's possible to play a tune on a music keyboard, and adjust the timing, delete dud notes or add special effects and then replay the tune. This is possible because MIDI doesn't send the actual sound, but a digital code which represents the notes to be played.

The Amiga has several very good sequencing programs available. My favourite is MusicX v2, which although intimidating at first, is a very flexible and powerful program. Short sequences can be recorded, edited and then combined into larger groups. These groups can themselves be combined with other groups, which makes building up a vocal part, layer by layer very easy. Other contenders for top Amiga music program include Bars and Pipes, which is allegedly available free on the Compuserve on-line system, (if you can find it).

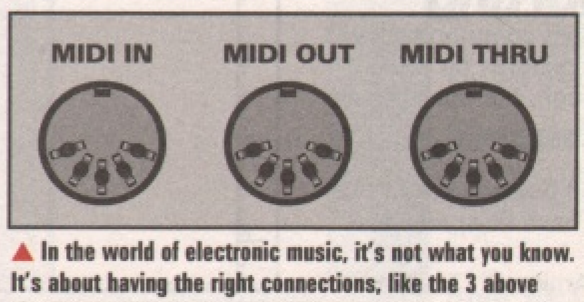


▲ Camouflage is a new Amiga MIDI sequencer, and shows a great deal of promise.



Recently I discovered Camouflage, a shareware MIDI sequencer which promises to be one of the most powerful ever released for the Amiga with support for multiple MIDI interfaces, General MIDI and audio recording. Initial experience has shown it to be a little unstable, but work is ongoing and you should make a point of checking it out for yourself. Camouflage is available for downloading from the Aminet archives.

Remember also that good and faithful programs such as OctaMED can also be used with MIDI equipment, and this is often the fastest way for Amiga musicians to expand their set-up and start making use of the extra sounds. If you are tired of being limited to four or eight sounds at once, wait until you



▲ In the world of electronic music, it's not what you know. It's about having the right connections, like the 3 above

Where to start?

MIDI hardware comes in dozens of different varieties. Some of the most entry-level stuff consists of "Home keyboards" such as the ubiquitous Yamaha series. These units often include a keyboard and speakers, and can generate backing rhythms and drum tracks.

However, I would have to recommend that you stay clear of the cheaper versions. Although they have long progressed beyond hateful Bossanova bleeps and most are MIDI compatible, they will not offer your the same flexibility as a dedicated MIDI set-up: it's like comparing a midi hi-fi system with a set of hi-fi separates. (Yes, they both have the same word "midi" in their names, but this is a quirk of fate so don't confuse these terms as they have nothing to do with each other).

Instead, get a good MIDI sound module and a master keyboard, or an all-in-one synth and keyboard. Remember, you can always add more instruments as your budget increases and MIDI will allow you to play many different instruments at once. If you are worried about the future of the Amiga, remember MIDI instruments will work on any platform with a suitable MIDI interface.

How much?



▲ A typical Amiga MIDI interface.

A few years ago, trying to kit yourself out with MIDI equipment would have cost you an arm and a leg. Maybe a few internal organs too. Now, professional quality instruments such as Roland sound modules are available for under a hundred quid. Try dealers such as TurnKey in London (tel: 0171 379 5148, or E-mail them at: sales@turnkey.demon.co.uk). These types of sound module can typically play 24 notes at once, using up to 16 different voices. They have built in drum kits and sound effects, and digital effects such as reverb and echo.

In order to use them on your Amiga, you'll need a MIDI interface to fit to the Amiga's serial port to convert signals to and from the MIDI standard. These cost around £25, such as the ProMIDI Interface from HiSoft (tel: 01525 718181, e-mail: sales@hisoft.co.uk).

The last link in the chain is software, and here there is still a wide selection. If you are a tracker addict, you can keep using OctaMED or SoundStudio, as these speak fluent MIDI. If you prefer a more flexible approach to music composition, hunt down MusicX, Bars and Pipes or the shareware program Camouflage (a demo is available on Aminet).

If you want to be able to play your music on a music keyboard, you can buy several octaves of MIDI generating keys for just over £100. These will offer many advantages over using a computer keyboard, with most of them being velocity sensitive (how hard you hit the keys), and will also allow you to play chords.

connect a MIDI sound module and can play 32, professional quality instruments at once.

Hardware

Practically all electronic music instruments are MIDI compatible, and in fact many instruments are only possible at all because of MIDI. Here's a brief list of the types of MIDI hardware which are available. The term 'synthesiser' is so misleading these days, that it's easy to get confused.

Synthesiser

This is generally taken to mean a system consisting of a keyboard with a built in sound-generator. The keyboard will trigger the sounds, but also transmit MIDI information to control other MIDI equipment. The synthesiser will also have a MIDI input for receiving information from an external source, such as a sequencer program running on a computer. Some systems include their own built-in sequencers and even have disk drives to store sounds and songs. These are referred to as music workstations. Synthesisers have been undergoing a bit of a revolution of late, with a turn away from the pure digital sounds back to a more analogue feel – a control panel consisting of eight anonymous buttons and a single-line LCD display is out, and large screens with dozens of knobs and sliders are in.

Sound Module

A sound modules is a synthesiser without the keyboard. It has MIDI input to receive information (from a keyboard or a sequencer), and an audio output. Most modern sound modules are GM compatible, and include drum sounds as well as pianos, strings, bass and so on. Specialist modules are also available: perhaps containing only piano sounds, or only drum and bass sounds.

Drum Machine

These are sound module dedicated to creating drum sounds.



▲ **Sound modules are usually innocuous looking grey boxes like this.**

Some have built in mini-sequencers, designed to store drum patterns. Drum machines are less popular: most sound modules have excellent drum sounds, and the eminently more flexible sampler is now used to store drum loops and individual hits instead.

Sampler

Using the same principles which allow the Amiga to replay real sounds, a sampler is a unit which replays the sounds of real instruments. However, that is a very broad description and most samplers are instruments in their own right. They can replay 32 or more sounds at once, and include envelope features to shape the sound and apply filters and other special digital effects. Samplers need to store their sounds, and so come with floppy or even hard disk drives. Samplers are used to provide individual instrument sounds, vocals, complete drum loops and even samples of speech or other sound effects. They are incredibly useful and it's possible to create an entire song using only a single sampler as long as you have the right sounds to start with.

Finishing Touches

As well as the sound generating equipment, various other items are needed in order to complete a home studio. If you are using several sound sources, you will need to mix the sounds together. This is easily achieved by using – surprise, surprise – a mixer. There is now a range of mixers specifically aimed at home users, which are affordably priced (starting at just over £100) and yet can accept eight or more inputs and mix them down to a stereo output.

A mixer also makes it possible to add extra effects to your sounds by using a digital effects processor. These are units which once inserted into the audio path will provide you with compression, echo, reverb, delay, flange, phase and other effects – all essential if you need professional results. If you are recording live vocals, a microphone will connect to the mixer and allow you to adjust levels and equalisation (the bass, midrange and treble settings).



▲ **Samplers are most often in rack-mount form, with built in disk drives.**

Finally, you need some way of recording the results. An ordinary cassette tape is fine if you want to share your work with friends. A DAT machine is better though, and although expensive, means your work can be duplicated without quality loss and used to master CDs or records. With the price of modern CD-R drives ever dropping, it's now even possible to burn your songs directly.

If you follow this shopping list, the chances are that before you know it, you'll have spent over a thousand pounds and have filled your bedroom to bursting point with kit. Just remember that you don't need to buy everything in one go: start with a MIDI instrument and get a feel for the sounds it can make. Other equipment can be improvised or hired as is needed, and of course, no number of flashing red LED's or black rack mount boxes can ever be a substitute for actual talent! ■

John Kennedy

Glossary

MIDI

Musical Instrument Digital Interface. A world wide standard for sending data between instruments and computers.

General MIDI

If an instrument is "General MIDI compatible" then it will meet a minimum specification, have a certain number of instruments assigned to particular voices and so replay any GM tune as it was intended.

MIDI Interface

In order to be connected to a MIDI instrument, the Amiga needs an interface. This consists of a small box which connects to the Amiga's serial port and features the 5-pin DIN sockets which MIDI uses.

Wired World



Still looking at advanced HTML techniques, this month we concentrate on colouring our tables and fonts to produce a monster site.

We looked at HTML tables in a previous tutorial but a couple of neat, new aspects added to Amiga browsers means we can create an attractive looking part of our page without needing extra in-line graphics, thus less bandwidth is required so pages will load faster and look great even if the browser has images turned off.

We're going to play with a tag called FONT which allows control over the size and colour of fonts inside our HTML document. Even better, we can control those aspects on the same line. A simple example of FONT is to change the colour to brilliant white.

```
<FONT COLOR="#ffffff">
```

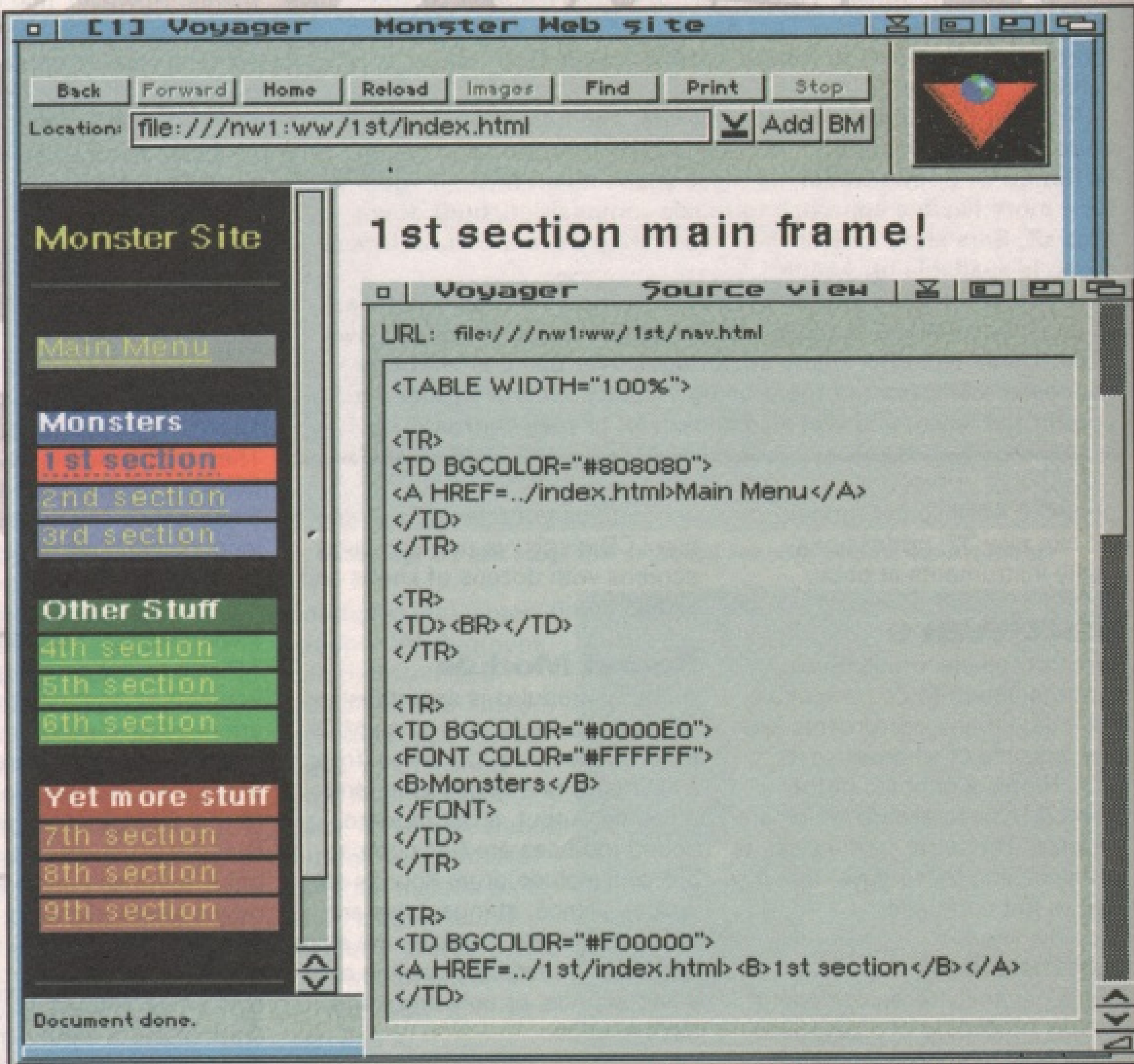
Fairly simple, the ffffff are three values of red, green and blue in hexadecimal so this gives us a 24-bit choice of colours. If you're unsure about picking a colour, select a colour in a paint package and check the RGB values from the palette editor and convert them to hexadecimal. Probably the easiest way to convert decimal to hex is to use ARexx. Checkout this example;

```
rx "say d2x(100)"
```

Rexxmast will need to be running of course but every self-respecting Amiga user should have this running anyway. This will give you the hexadecimal conversion of 100 (64). Do this three times for R, G and B values, stick all of the digits together and you will have the exact colour from your paint package. Don't forget the leading hash symbol.

Strictly speaking

For strictly accurate HTML, it's a good idea to terminate FONT. Not a bad idea since the colour change will only remain effective inside the <FONT> tag and </FONT> terminator. The next useful attribute for FONT is SIZE. This is a little strange, as font size changes are specified relatively from the standard font size (around a 12 point font). We can go <FONT SIZE=-2> which is around an 8 point font normally up to a <FONT SIZE=+4> which is normally a massive 20 odd point font. Now let's try the following;



▲ **Here's the aim of our tutorial here. Frames put to use with a colourful navigation (nav) bar, using BGCOLOR inside tables. Looks great and not a picture in sight.**

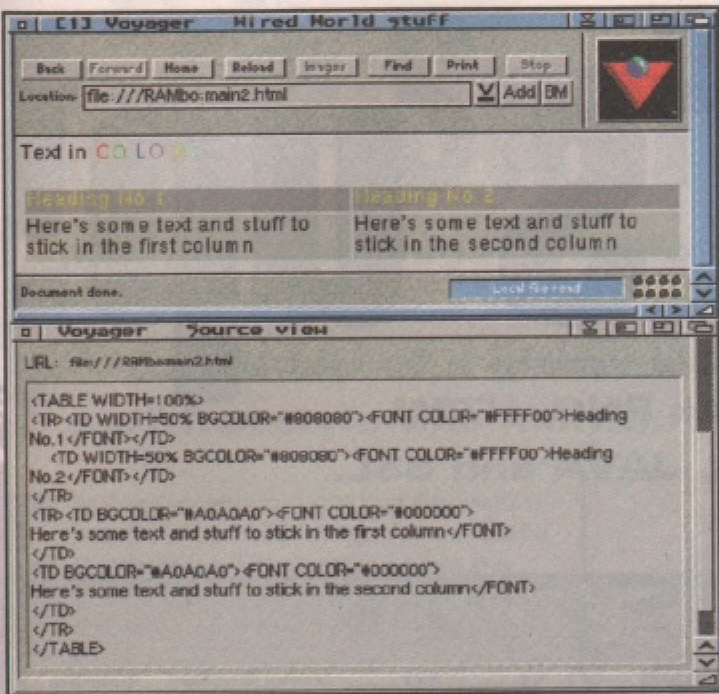
<FONT SIZE=+2 COLOR="#FF0000">This text is big and red</FONT>This text is back to normal.

Why not go to town with;

```
<FONT COLOR="#FF0000">C</FONT>
<FONT COLOR="#00FF00">O</FONT>
<FONT COLOR="#0000FF">L</FONT>
<FONT COLOR="#FF00FF">O</FONT>
<FONT COLOR="#FFFF00">U</FONT>
<FONT COLOR="#00FFFF">R</FONT>
```

Behold, psychedelic colour and, unlike HTML, we've spelt colour correctly as well. Now it's time to get funky with tables by using the BGCOLOR attribute inside the table cell definitions <TD>. Same situation, <TD BGCOLOR="#RRGGBB"> and we'll miraculously have a background colour in that cell. Super neat but it looks best if we don't use the table frame functions so that the text is formatted on the page with strips of floating background colour. Let's make a really simple HTML document to demonstrate;

```
<HTML>
<HEAD><TITLE>Table test</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY BGCOLOR=#FFFFFF>
```



▲ **At the top we can see the effect of <FONT COLOR=x> while below the basics of a table using BG COLOR and FONT COLOR for headings.**

```
<TABLE WIDTH=100%>
<TR>
<TD WIDTH=50% BGCOLOR=#808080>
<FONT COLOR=#FFFF00>
Left hand heading</FONT></TD>
<TD WIDTH=50% BGCOLOR=#808080>
<FONT COLOR=#FFFF00>
Right hand heading</FONT></TD>
</TR>
</TABLE>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

Here we've set up an HTML document with a background colour pure white as set inside the BODY tag. Our Table is defined and specified 100% of the available width. We've only defined one table row with the <TR> tag and two table cells on that row with the TD tags. The two table cells are each 50% of the width thanks to the WIDTH statement. Next comes the BGCOLOR setting the background of the cell to a grey. The font is then set to bright yellow and the text comes next.

We finish off by terminating the FONT and TD tags and naturally the table row with </TR> and finally the Table itself. The result of this short example is two headings on the same line, each occupying half of the screen width. They will be attractively rendered as yellow on a grey banner strip. The trick is to have the following rows without any BGCOLOR and we'll have nicely headered columns of text. Insert the following between the </TR> and </TABLE>.

```
<TR><TD>
Type lots of text here for the left
column...</TD> <TD>Type lots of text here
for the right column...</TD></TR>
```

The font colour should be back to the original before we messed with it. You may need to add <FONT COLOR=#000000> for some buggy browsers though HTML specification strictly says we do not. The text will appear as nice columns underneath the headings.

Another neat technique is to use BGCOLOR in table cells after the headline as well. The idea is normally to use a colour that is only slightly different from the background which looks impressive for lists or perhaps even a horizontal nav bar Frame coupled with last month's Frame techniques. Let's use this as an example;

Pressed buttons

CU's Web site has a nav frame permanently on the left of the screen. Each button is an in-line graphic. Normally this works really well since the left Frame permanently stays there and only needs to be loaded once. However, even this Frame is reloaded when going to each of the section indexes because we want to substitute a 'pressed' button when we arrive. You get the idea from the CU web site. We can make a faster version of this with no images at all, Frames and a simple table with intelligent use of BGCOLOR.

Let's make some directories for each of the buttons. Always a good idea to tidy up a web site and since we hope to have indexes inside each section for our monster site, this helps the organisation. We'll need some HTML from last month to define our Frames;

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Monster Web site</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<FRAMESET FRAMEBORDER=NO ➔
BORDER=0 COLS="115, *">
<FRAME NAME="nav" MARGINHEIGHT ➔
="0" SCROLLING="auto" SRC= ➔
"nav.html">
<FRAME NAME="main" MARGINWIDTH ➔
="10" MARGINHEIGHT="10" ➔
SCROLLING="auto" SRC="main.html">
</FRAMESET>
<NOFRAMES>
<H3>We're sorry but Monster Site
requires a Frames capable brows-
er!</NOFRAMES>
</HTML>
```

This index defines a simple two Frame page. The left hand Frame will be a horizontal 115 pixel wide nav bar while another Frame will fill the remainder of the screen. Note the <NOFRAMES> section which will appear if the site is accessed by a browser with no Frames capability. The nav bar will be loaded from nav.html and the main window from main.html

The important part is the nav bar. We need a simple table using BGCOLOR to form the hyperlinks. The code will be a little too large to include here but the gist of it is that we place three HTML files in the root of our web site.

The index.html with the Frame definitions as above, nav.html for the navigation bar and main.html for the main Frame. This is repeated inside subdirectories for each of our sections. The major difference is that the nav.html changes the background colour for the table cell/link to that area. This way we have a pressed button look...

```
<TABLE WIDTH="100%">
<TR>
<TD BGCOLOR="#0000E0">
<FONT COLOR="#FFFFFF">
<B>Monsters</B>
</FONT>
</TD>
</TR>
<TR>
<TD BGCOLOR="#6060E0">
<A href=1st/index.html>
1st section</A>
</TD>
</TR>
</TABLE>
```

Above is an example from the nav bar table with a 'Monsters' heading in dark blue with bold white text followed by a link cell in light blue. We haven't bothered to set the colour since it's a text link and this can only be one colour anyway – as specified by LINK="#RRGGBB" in the BODY tag.
Note that each row <TR> only has one cell <TD>. Now inside the 1st/ directory where the link points to, the nav bar will be altered to the following;

```
<TR>
<TD BGCOLOR="#F00000">
<A href=../1st/index.html>
<B>1st section</B></A> </TD>
</TR>
```

Since we are actually at this link, there's not much point having the href there but it's left here to illustrate the '../' added to the front of the path. '../' goes UP one directory which is needed now since we are in a sub directory. The big change though is that the cell background colour has gone to bright red and the text has been bolded. It's quite apparent which section we are in now. ■

Matt Bettinson

Pages on disk



The entire directory structure is on the floppy and CD-ROM in the Magazine directory. This illustrates sophisticated use of a simple table to avoid the need for inline graphics at all. One important fact to remember though is that the nav bar must contain the tag...<BASE TARGET=_top> so that the entire Frame structure is reloaded from the top. Try leaving it out to see what happens. This isn't the most efficient use of Frames since the nav bar needs to be reloaded in each section however if this is a larger site, each section will be an index and throughout the nav bar will indicate which section the browser is viewing.
Next month I'll be running an HTML Q&A session, so please E-mail your questions to wiredworld@cu-amiga.co.uk or snail mail to Wired World at the usual address.



Net God speaks

You all know someone who isn't on the Internet. You probably even know another Amiga user who isn't on. Why aren't they? E-mail sounds like a reason to write more letters to overseas relatives? Web browsing sound expensive, technical and just a waste of time? Beats me, I don't understand them and probably neither do you. However, now the Amiga is looking like a premier Internet machine, we've clarified the costs in full in this month's feature and provided ridiculously easy to set-up software... There isn't an excuse any more. Not even a hint at one apart from ignorance. That's where you come in. You wont have to do everything for them, just point them at this month's CU Amiga. Enough already, let's ALL get on-line!

Surf's up!

This month CU Online goes PNG, HTML news of frame and tables, JAVA and SSL.



CU Online goes PNG

The debate is over, CU Amiga's Web site will make the move to PNG on the 1st of June. Now that the latest Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 beta supports (badly) PNG loading, users of other platforms can access the site while Amiga users can fully exploit faster and more attractive PNG progressive displays. Currently only Voyager-NG supports PNG internally but all browsers can use the excellent PNG datatypes available such as the Aminet util/dtype/akPNG43x.lha, full details on PNG and what it means can be found in the news section of CU's web site at **http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk**

Miami 2.1 gets SSL

Amiga web browsers need secure HTML. This is an encrypted method of sending form data and the like for safe transactions over the Net. The classic application is on-line shopping where the browsers credit card details are kept safe from prying eyes by using Secure Socket Layer or SSL. Rather than implement this via the Web browser, Holger Kruse has added the facility into his excellent Miami Amiga TCP/IP stack.

Once Miami 2.1 with SSL had been released then Voyager 2.70 followed with the first working Amiga secure HTML browser. A registered Miami 2.1 is needed to access SSL and the system for obtaining the right encryption library from another site is convoluted – thanks the American laws on encryption technology. Existing registered Miami users will also need to upgrade keyfiles to version 2 with the new registration tool. The whole installer and international encryption library can be found on this months CD. The Miami home page is at **http://www.america.com/~kruse/amiga/Miami.html**



New Vapor site and Voyager-NG

Vaporsoft had some problems with their international mirrors but they seem to be resolved, in fact they've introduced a fantastic new-look web site showing off frames and tables to the fullest. The big news though is Voyager-NG 2.90 as yet again the shareware MUI based web browser goes from strength to strength. Now supporting SSL secure HTML (see Miami 2.1 item), table background colours, network status, built-in PNG progressive loader, text clipping from window and many bug fixes. Voyager-NG will be a main contender in next month's Battle of the Browsers part II as we place it head-to-head with IBrowse and AWeb 3. The unregistered V-NG will run for 30 minutes before quitting with the full version costing £20.00 from **http://www.vap-or.com**

Haage announce Merapi Java

Haage and Partner is responsible for the Storm C++ compiler, the only Amiga development package to compile for PowerPC. Now Haage have announced that they will bring Java to the Amiga. The 'Merapi' Virtual Java Machine (VJM) is set to be released in July/August. The Merapi JVM is being programmed by Jeroen Vermeulen in conjunction with the Haage Storm C team. Merapi will feature a Just In Time (JIT) compiler for extra speed if running big Java applications like Corel Office for Java. Merapi is reported to be interfacable to Web browsers like Voyager-NG to offer Java for web content also. Finally Merapi is said to be integrated into the Storm Development System and a port to the pOS and PowerUP PowerPC operating systems is under way. Haage and Partner's web site is at **http://www.haagepartner.com/ja_e.htm**



Surf of the Month

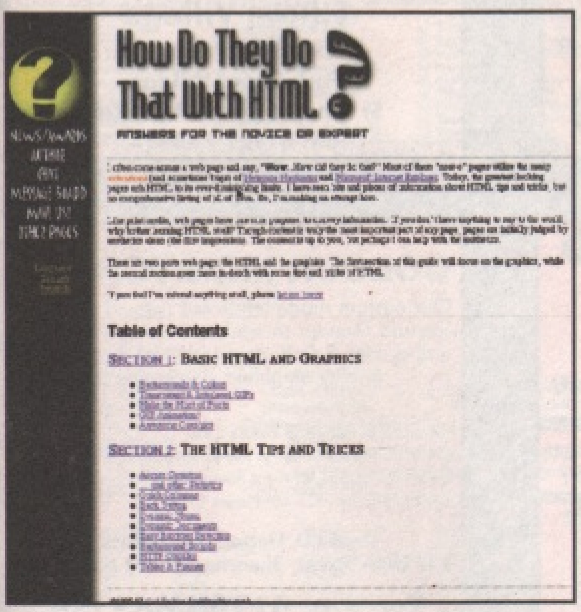
Non-Amiga specific novelty sites and a new online Amiga speciality site, rise to the top of a glassy sided tube as we surf freestyle this month...

Those sites in full

Safe Harbor
http://www.sharbor.com
The Onion:
http://www.theonion.com
Kurt Cobain's Magic Talking 8-Ball
http://www.xworld.com/cobain/askcobain.html
How do they do that with HTML?
http://www.nashville.net/~carl/htmlguide/
National Geographic Society
http://www.nationalgeographic.com
Kelloggs Strike Site
http://www.kelloggs-strike.co.uk

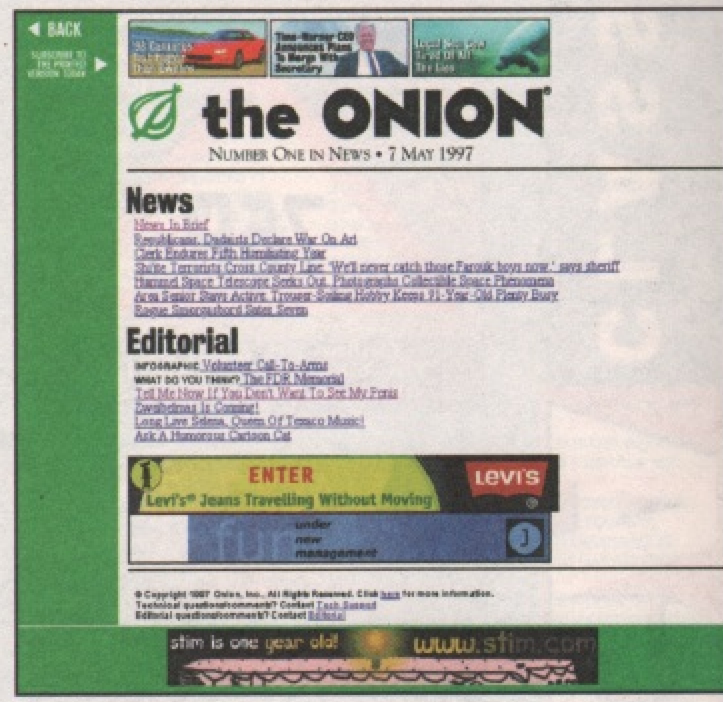


For anyone who thought that Germany had the drop on all things Amiga, **Safe Harbor** is a US site that covers the Amiga, Macintosh and PC, providing an online ordering service and more importantly perhaps, Amiga specific sites where you can order the latest products and downloads. Its speciality is Amiga desktop video which it has been passionate about since 1987. But they don't just stick to video. Safe Harbor's site covers so much stuff that there's even a search engine that will look for a particular product. The site has got tons of products all simply laid out and is pretty nippy. Most important of all it shows that the Amiga even has its fans in the PC and Mac infested United States...

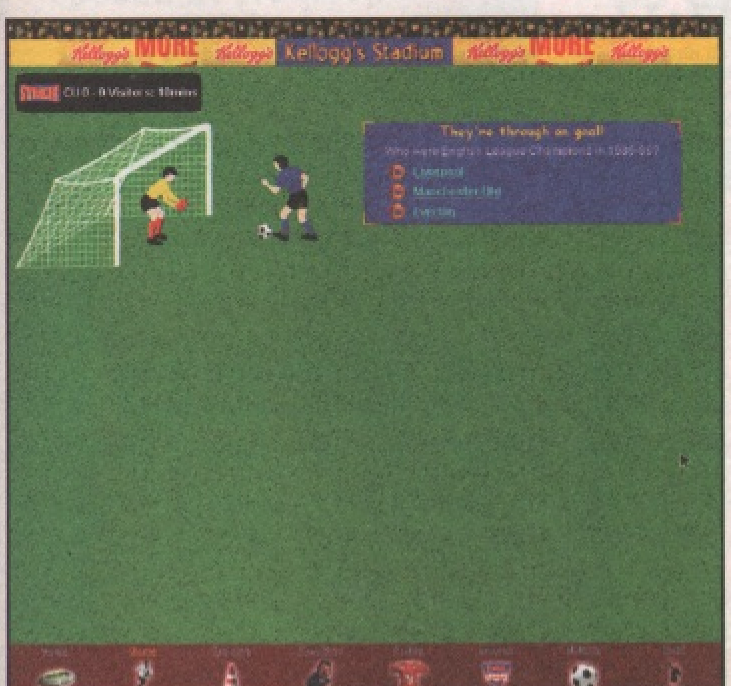


Slightly wandering off the straight and narrow of Amiga dedicated sites, I thought that this month, it might be interesting to look at several examples of fun, funny or frolicsome sites...

The Onion is a US-based satirical magazine, the online version of which has clean and fast pages that are updated weekly to include the world's top news stories. The site is HTML based, with no Java-based pages, so everyone can access it easily. The site contains four electronic issues of the weekly newstand magazine and even has an archive of published stories grouped by subject. It's certainly bitingly funny, it's definitely a professional site and at the moment, access is free! If up to the minute political satire is your bag, this is well worth a look.



Still in the states, there are never too few net loonies to disappoint you. Here though, the quality of people's lunacy is complemented by the sheer simplicity of their own sites. **Kurt Cobain's Magic Talking 8-Ball** has the late 'n great Kurt Cobain will answer your questions from beyond the grave through his favourite pool ball. All you will need to do is to ask the questions... You'll also need a .WAV player like Play16 or a datatype so that you can hear the maestro's vocal answers...



If you need to know something about the world, its forests, rivers, animals, cultures and so on, then you really must visit the **National Geographical Society's** web site. It really is a very good example of excellent site design and contains video and sound bites on many subjects. It's main feature is its massive database which holds a wealth of information just waiting to be unleashed.

For anyone who would like an address to give them some on line help with HTML, then **Just How Do They Do That With HTML,** is not a bad place to start. It might even prove ideal for any of you that are currently following our HTML tutorial in Wired World (pages 80-81). Here you can find a little instant help with all your HTML questions. It's online help database is by no means extensive, but it does provide an excellent starting point for all would-be Web page designers. There's even a chat area on the site, although it appeared to be deserted when I visited...

Lastly, if you're into interactive sports trivia, then the **Kelloggs-Strike** site is one of the best I've ever seen. Answer the questions to get posession of the ball and eventually score goals. You can even play in a league against other players. Really worth a look! ■



Garth Sumpter

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AlfaDuo 44pin to 40pin Interface & IDE cables...£20.00
AlfaQuatro 3x40pin interface & IDE cables £39.95
DD floppy disks (50) *including multicoloured disk labels* £13.00
DD floppy disks (100) *including multicoloured disk labels* £25.00
3.5" Hard Drive Kit for A600/1200 *+ Install software* £15.00
Diskbox to hold 10 discs £2.00
Animal Jungle design and Dinosaur design ...£5.00
Optical Mouse Mat £5.00
2 in 1 Scanner/Mouse Pad *Can be used as a memo pad* £5.00
Amiga Power Supply 4.5 amp £19.95
Plain Wristrest £2.00

CD Cleaners - 1/2 price

CD Rom Cleaner £3.00
Automatic CD Rom Cleaner *(battery powered)* ...£10.00
Laser Lens Cleaner £4.50

Accelerator Boards

1230 33Mhz + 4Mb £135.00
1230 33Mhz + 8Mb £145.00
1230 33Mhz + 16Mb..................£175.00
1230 50Mhz + 4Mb £179.00
1230 50Mhz + 8Mb £189.00
1230 50Mhz + 16Mb..................£219.00

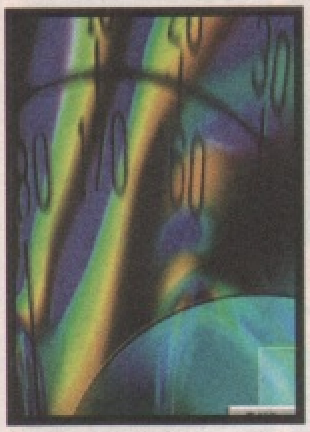
All prices include VAT. Please add £3.50 P&P for items under £30.00, £5.00 for items over £30.00, £8.00 P&P for Scanners, Speakers & Hard Drives, £10.00 courier for next day. Tax Free Export Orders Welcome.

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FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ makes a few notes of MIDI and music matters this month.

Q. What is MIDI?

A. It's a "Musical Instrument Digital Interface", used to connect together various pieces of electronic music equipment. This makes it possible for a musical keyboard to trigger sounds on a sound module for example. It's also possible to connect computers to a MIDI instrument, to record and play MIDI information.

Q. What is General MIDI then?

A. GM, or General MIDI, is a standard which defines which sounds an instrument has available. A piece of music composed on a GM module will play back on any GM module. GM was introduced by Roland. There are also some other enhancements, usually used as well as GM, including GS and XG from Yamaha.

Q. What other sort of equipment comes with MIDI interfaces?

A. Almost any electronic instrument. This includes keyboard synthesisers, sound modules (synthesisers without keyboards), drum machines and external samplers (dedicated sample replay machines). It's also possible to get MIDI versions of guitars, percussion and wind instruments, or to adapt older instruments to understand MIDI.

Q. What does a MIDI connection look like?

A. MIDI sockets are 5 pin DIN plugs. If a piece of equipment sends MIDI information (a keyboard for example) it will have a MIDI OUT socket. If it receives information (such as a drum machine) it will have a MIDI IN socket. If the equipment both sends and receives (such as a synthesiser keyboard) it will have both MIDI IN and MIDI OUT. Some equipment will have MIDI THRU, which echoes information arriving at the MIDI IN port.

Q. Why does MIDI THRU exist?

A. By connecting a lead to the MIDI THRU port, you can chain together several MIDI compatible devices. It's possible to connect the MIDI THRU of a sound module to the MIDI IN of a drum machine, and connect the MIDI THRU of the drum machine to the MIDI IN of another sound module.

Q. How does MIDI work?

A. MIDI is a serial link, and it doesn't send any sound information. Instead it sends a binary code which controls the connected devices. For example, imagine you have a music keyboard connected to a synthesiser sound module. Pressing a key sends a code describing the note and how hard you pressed the key to the sound module. The sound module then generates the sound which is output through its ordinary audio outputs.

Q. Won't all the connected devices make the same noise?

A. MIDI uses channels to separate information. Each note or volume message that is transmitted includes a special channel, from 0 to 15. The MIDI devices can be configured to only respond to information sent on the relevant channel: this means up to 16 totally separate sounds can be played simultaneously.

Q. What else does MIDI transmit?

A. MIDI can be used to send almost any parameter relevant to a music instrument. This includes the particular voice to play (the patch number), the volume, the note and various other elements such as pitch bending, overall volume and panning data. How much information the instrument receives and transmits varies: older MIDI instruments might not accept volume information or panning. Modern equipment might transmit MIDI information for every setting changed.

MIDI can also be used to exchange samples: for example, a dedicated sampler module can send a sample using MIDI to a computer for editing. Sample Dump support like this was only possible on the Amiga with a package called "Clarity".

Q. How does MIDI work on the Amiga?

A. The Amiga needs a small box called a MIDI Interface which connects to its serial port before it can be connected to any MIDI equipment. This box contains the DIN plugs required for at least a MIDI IN and MIDI OUT connection: usually more. Suitable software on the Amiga can then capture and generate MIDI information, a process called "Sequencing". Sequencing software on the Amiga includes: MusicX, Bars and Pipes and good old OctaMED.

Q. Why is it such a good thing?

A. With the wide variety of MIDI equipment around today, you can create a professional quality home studio all based on using your Amiga as a sequencer. You can play notes on a music keyboard, edit them on screen using the mouse, and then replay them. Remember, one MIDI sequencer can control up to 16 different voices at once.

Q. What do I do if I want to try MIDI out?

A. If you already use a package such as OctaMED, imagine what you would do if you had another 16 tracks at your disposal: you could include percussion, strings, guitars – in fact, anything you wanted. This is possible once you buy a MIDI sound module, for a little over £100, or less if you shop around or look for second hand bargains. You don't need a music keyboard to get started, but it does make entering notes simpler – and may be velocity sensitive (detects how hard you hit a key, to make a note louder).

You'll need a MIDI interface for the Amiga, and a way to listen to the output of your new sound module. Piping it through your hi-fi or a small mixer, will combine it with the Amiga's output.

As your music set-up grows, you can add more instruments such as drum machines, samplers or keyboards. Next stop? A top ten hit or even a demo tune on the CU Amiga cover CD! (You could even try checking out Sound Lab on page 84 too!) ■

John Kennedy

Logos, meanings and mysteries:

CD ROM — CD32 queries, ParNET and various other CD-ROM-related problems.

EXPANSION — All about upgrading RAM, operating systems and processors.

ACCESSORIES — Plug-in hardware of any kind: scanners, disk drives etc.

PROGRAMS — Answers to queries on particular pieces of software.

SOUND — Music, sampling, MIDI and anything that makes a loud noise.

UTILITIES — Miscellaneous tools to keep your Amiga running smoothly.

PRINTERS — Form-feeds, page-breaks, preferences and lots, lots more!

MONITORS — Monitors, TVs, modulators, screen-modes and all that stuff.

GRAPHICS — Pixels, sprites, animation, pictures. In one small word: graphics.

BUSINESS — Spreadsheets, databases, organisers, accounts ...

COMMS — Everything you need answering about the Internet

HELP — Not everything fits into a pigeonhole, but anything you like fits in here.

Q&A

Whatever the level of your technical problems, put them to our experts and we'll do our best to sort you out. Remember to give us as much info on your systems and problems as possible to help us help you.

Tower troubles

After following your article "Build Your Own Tower", I bought a PC minitower and a Mitsumi FX400G CD ROM, and have the ATAPI plug 'n play software installed on my hard drive. The MAP audio CD player works, but I cannot access the data on the CD-ROMs.

I phoned the PD house that supplied the program, who said that the drive was not mounted. I edited the startup sequence with "mount cd0:" as they suggested, but on boot up, the computer still does not recognise this.

Mr Steven Pike, Gloucester

Mount cd0: is the wrong command. If you try to mount a device (the colon after the name indicates this) it will look for an entry in your mountlist. CD0 is a mountfile and is seperate from the normal mountlist. To mount it, do not use the colon. If you put the CD0 file in Devs/dos-drivers, it will be automatically mounted when Workbench starts up.

New hard drive

A few questions:
1. I've purchased a 2.5" hard drive for my A1200 and I have to say that it is the best thing that I have ever bought (apart from the Amiga itself). While I was on the boot options screen I noticed that my hard drive was registered as a SCSI device instead of an IDE, is this alright?
2. I have a 2Mb RAM board from Gasteiner and I was wondering if I could remove the 2Mb SIMM and replace it with a 4Mb SIMM?
3. Can I still get the game Moonstone somewhere?
4. I've seen pictures of Elite 2 in mags which are completely different from the screens I get. Have I got a duff copy or something?
5. How much gear do I need to run Sim City 2000?
6. One of my friends has a PC. He said I could buy a PC CD-ROM drive and connect it to my Amiga using a Squirrel. If so what would I need to run your superb CUCDs?

J. Seeney, W.Yorkshire

1. Don't worry – there is absolutely nothing wrong. All hard drives are fundamentally the same, apart from the way the hardware interfaces to your computer. IDE hard drives such as the one you use have a different form of interface to SCSI devices, but the language they speak is the same. The SCSI.Device referred to in the boot options screen is software to handles the drives. Whether your hard drive (or indeed your CD-ROM drive) is IDE or SCSI hardware, it is normal for it to use SCSI.Device.
2. Yes, but consider getting more. SIMMs are so cheap these days that the difference in cost between a 4 and an 8 Mb SIMM is minimal. Your memory can cope with up to 8Mb.
3. Tricky. Direct Software might find a copy for you – (tel. 01604 722499).
4. There is an option to improve detail in the menus.
5. 4Mb RAM and about 5Mb free hard drive space.
6. If you get a Squirrel you can connect SCSI CD-ROM drives. Without a Squirrel you can use IDE drives, a cheaper but more tricky option we have covered thoroughly in the Build Your Own Tower feature. With the Squirrel, you will have to arrange a power supply for the SCSI CD-ROM. You can buy them in cases with a power supply. This is how most CD-ROM systems advertised in CU work.

Faster clocks?

Although I have finally upgraded my A1200 to an '030/68882 50Mhz spec., I still find screens are very slow (Imagine 5.0 running in 256 colour mode etc.). I realise this is because the custom chips and Chip RAM is still running at the 14Mhz system default.

I assume this is to not over-clock the default A1200's 14Mhz '020 processor. Since the A4000 '030 was a 33Mhz model is it safe to assume that the Amiga's custom chip set and RAM could be clocked at 33Mhz?

Is it possible to replace the oscillator on the A1200 mother board with a 33Mhz one to gain a moderate graphics speed increase or would doing so affect other components/timings?

Paul Davis, Street, Somerset.

Ah if only it were that simple. There isn't that kind of correlation between CPU speeds and the clock speeds of other chips. The chips in the A4000 run identically to those of the 1200. The AGA chipset is just a slow chipset by modern standards. If you want a graphics speed up there's no alternative to a graphics card.

Try playing about with screen-modes, as they can make a noticeable difference to speed. The Multiscan modes look the best, but are also the slowest. It's a good idea to configure your software with a screenmode that matches the usage. Use multiscan modes for programs that don't require quick refreshes, and use PAL (or NTSC) modes for ones which do.

Upgrade time

I have enjoyed my Amiga 500 for quite a number of years but there is very little going for it now. For this reason I have now decided to purchase an Amiga 1200 and would apreciate your answers to the following questions:
1. Can the A500 TV modulator be used with the A1200, or will I need a new one?
2. I came across an advert from a PD library for "Relokick 1.4" and PC Emulator v2.31. Would you recommend these two utilities?
3. How much RAM would the A1200 require in order to run PC programs at a reasonable speed with the emulator?

Robert Imossi, Gibraltar.

1. The A1200's modulator is built-in.

2. Relokick is a "degrader", a program which removes some of the additional functionality of an A1200. This allows some old software which would otherwise fail on an A1200 to run properly, and if you have a lot of old software, it's a good idea.

PC Emulators will run MS-DOS applications but, as they have to emulate the functions of a PC x86 processor, are very slow, yet are OK for applications that don't need speed. Given how cheap PD libraries are, buy the software – if you decide they aren't what you wanted, then the worst you'll get is a couple of fairly expensive blank disks.

3. You can't speed up your computer by just throwing more memory at it. Adding a Fast RAM expansion will speed up an A1200 a bit, but to make a PC emulator run any faster than a slow 8086 PC AT, you will need an accelerator card. Power computing (tel: 01234 851500) is offering a current bargain accelerator at £100 for a 25Mhz '030 with 4Mb RAM a nippy little device expansion that will serve you well, if not exactly state of the art. How much you need is a matter of personal choice, but when it comes to emulating CPUs, the more RAM on-board, the better.

Tower clarifications..?



1. I have been following your excellent "Build Your Own Tower" feature. I've scrounged an old 286 desktop with a powersupply and I am adapting your feature as necessary. Will a desktop do as well as a new tower?
2. In the boxout on page 31 of the April issue you say some older drives and 2.5" drives will not work with a second device in the chain. Is there any way of telling them apart except for actually buying one and trying it?
3. Can you name the dealer you mentioned who is selling CD-ROM drives for £18 as you mentioned in the article? I can't find any so cheap. Some dealers laugh when I mention 2x speed. What is the optimum speed for a CD-ROM drive on an Amiga?
4. While I'm asking – when I copy disks to my hard drive, I end up with drawers full of files that are already on my Workbench such as Loadwb, endcli, ppmore etc. Can I safely delete these duplicates?

Dave Hadaway, Co. Antrim

1. A desktop case will do fine, the principles are exactly the same. The reason we talked towers is that the old fashioned desktop designs take up far more space for what they offer you than a tower.
2. If you are after a new drive for your tower/desktop case, go for a 3.5" drive every time. The only advantage of 2.5" units is that they fit internally. 3.5" units are cheaper and better, and all modern 3.5" units will work with a second device. If you are offered a drive and are unsure if it will work, the thing to look for is master/slave settings. If the drive has some way of changing master/slave settings or the label says something like "internally configured as master unit" then it will work. Some 2.5" drives and very old 3.5" drives just assume that they are the only device.
3. We didn't name a specific stockist as these sorts of bargains change from week to week. The minimum speed of a CD-ROM drive in the PC market is now considered to be 8x, anything slower tends to be sold off cheap. Buy a copy of the magazine Micro Mart and scan through the ads for that week's best buy. As for an optimum speed, as with all things computer related, optimum is the one that's faster than whatever you have. 2x will just about do, but we would recommend 4x for comfort and more if you can afford it.
4. Normally, yes, but sometimes software assumes a program will be distributed with it for convenience. As a general guide, anything found in sub directories called c, devs, l, libs, fonts or system, can be moved to the main directories of those names in your workbench and then the spares deleted. If you keep track of what you delete from where and only delete duplicates, you can always put them back if things stop working.

X-CAD users



CU Amiga readers who are using the Nov'96 cover disk of X-CAD 2000 and are interested in exchanging ideas, offering support and discussing this great program, please write to:-
Tony McGartland,
11, Lammy Drive,
Omagh,
Co. Tyrone.
BT78 5JB.
N. Ireland.

I know there are many X-CAD users out there who would be interested in setting up a discussion group or support network.

Tony McGartland, Co. Tyrone

Good idea Tony!

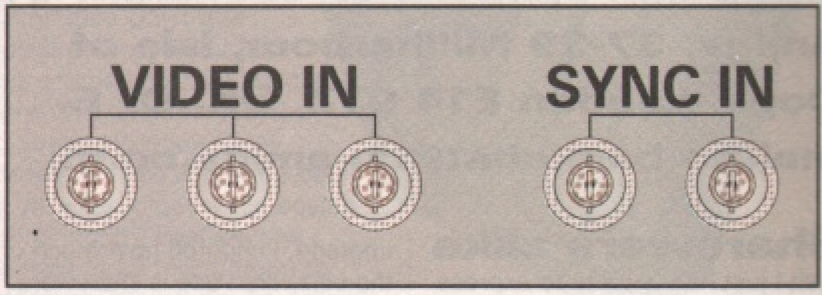
Tech Tips

We get more letters asking for help than we can possibly fit in each issue of CU Amiga, let alone find time to answer. To reduce the bottleneck, we are introducing a regular column where we'll cover more general problems. If you have a tech tip that could save your fellow Amiga users grief, mark it Tech Tips and send it to the usual address or E-mail us at: techtips@cu-amiga.co.uk

This month: VGA monitors.

We've had a spate of requests for help with VGA monitors, and connecting the type that use BNC connectors at the back. BNCs are widely used as a profesional connector because they offer a very good contact. Those two prongs are part responsible for this, being used to lock each of the connectors into place.

If your monitor looks like this at the back...



then you have a BNC type. VGA BNC adapters can be bought from Maplin (tel: 01702 554000) for just under £20. These will terminate into a 15 way, high density D type connector – the standard for PC monitors. You will need to get an Amiga monitor adapter too – many of our advertisers sell them, try First Computer Centre (tel: 0113 231944) for example.

You may have seen a pin diagram of the Amiga's video out and decided that those RGB connections look easy, but the Amiga's RGB output is a little non-standard. The H/V syncs need to be buffered and crossed, the kind of thing which isn't a hard DIY job to do but simply isn't worth it - you won't save yourself any money as the commercial adapters are so cheap.

VGA monitors do not handle the 15.6kHz scan rates that the Amiga outputs when it is in a PAL screenmode (15.72 for NTSC). If you plug in a VGA type monitor and you get a black screen, or one with a lot of flicker on it, that is probably what is going on. VGA monitors run at about twice this frequency, try using the DBLPAL and multiscan modes. It may be a good idea to make workbench boot floppies with several different monitors set-up in preferences for easy interchangeability and to avoid your permanent set up booting into a display mode you can't view. Remember that any time the Amiga tries to open a 15kHz screen, you'll run into trouble - this means almost no games. Utility software can be set up to use a VGA friendly screenmode first – set screenmode preferences to WORKBENCH CLONE for easy switching of the screens opened by all your software. Games rarely give you the choice, however, and tend to open in PAL modes that a VGA monitor will not display.

How to write to Q&A ...

You can send your technical problems [or answers – Ed] to CU Amiga by the following means:
By letter to Q&A, CU Amiga Magazine, 37–39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ or Tech Tips at the same address.
E-mail: q+a@cu-amiga.co.uk or techtips@@cu-amiga.co.uk
We can accept letters or text files on floppy disk.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND SAEs. We regret that we cannot respond to queries directly, by post or over the phone, only through the pages of the magazine. We appreciate that some queries need quick answers, but we simply do not have the time to answer every query we get. SAEs go straight in the bin, so please save your stamps!

Backchat

Make yourself heard: send your views and opinions to Backchat: CU Amiga, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ, UK. Or E-mail to backchat@cu-amiga.co.uk

Shareware alike

I felt I just had to write to express my heartfelt thanks to all those wonderful people who have supplied so much of the software that I use so regularly.

No, not the commercial programs but the shareware that has filled the gap in these dark and desperate times waiting for an OS upgrade. I counted how much of the software I use is shareware and I was amazed that it was well over 80%. I have decided to register all of them which does seem only fair, so once again a very big thank you.

Before I sign off, I must compliment you on your CD. It is by far the best of all the mags (no need to mention any names)!!

Raymond McCarthy (Team Amiga), Surrey

Young guns blazing

letter of the month

I have been with the Amiga computer since 1990 with the good old A500, and have seen the computer mature with time. Just like your magazine. I personally have been with your magazine since 1990 (and I am 14 years old!) so, thanks to you and your wonderful team at CU Amiga I now consider myself an Amiga Enthusiastic Expert.

Since I am only 14 I can't expect you to publish my letter, but when you hear of my set-up, I am sure you will. I have paid for everything except the monitor and the printer. My computer is an A1200 with a Blizzard 1230 Mk 4 with 4Mb RAM, monitor, extra drive, soon to be CD-ROM, colour printer and a massive 1Gb 2.5 inch hard drive (which I managed to get brand new for only £150!).

You may be asking if I am rich but the answer is no. I have simply saved up my birthday money, Easter money and my pocket money (which isn't much because I buy your excellent magazine). I also have the full version of Imagine 2.0 and also the full versions of Real 3D Pro, Pixel Pro 3D, Cinema 4D 2 and the best cover disk ever, Imagine 4.0. With these programs I am producing wonderful images, some of which I may even send in to you at CU Amiga.

This just goes to show that even a 14 year old boy with £5 a week pocket money can build his Amiga into a computer that goes far beyond any PC. So if a 14 year old boy can do it, why can't the thousands of Amiga owners do it? Thanks for you time and effort that goes into every CU Amiga magazine you produce. LONG LIVE THE AMIGA!!!!!!

Scott MacDonald, Carlisle.

That's the spirit! It's good to know the time and effort we spend on the mag is appreciated, and don't be shy about sending us your artwork or any other Amiga creations you might have.

What's going on?

What the hell has happened to the Amiga? Do software developers think someone with an Amiga is mentally deficient and will buy any old crap they put on the shelves? I've had an Amiga since the A500 first came out and I can't remember a time when the Amiga scene was this bad.

I recently bought an A1200 for £50. Can you believe it? There was nothing wrong with it. Everything was there, even £100 of games like Frontier and Monkey Island I and II. Has everyone gone insane? Everyone thinks the Amiga is dead so they are trying to get rid of their Amiga accessories for any offer. I've been taking advantage of my friend's stupidity and got an '030 accelerator for £50.

What's happening to the Amiga games scene? Developers are running as fast as they can to get away from us loyal users. A mere mention of our beloved machine and they can't stop laughing. It got so bad I left the Amiga scene (please forgive me) and got a PlayStation, until one day I got a game called Breed 96 from my local PD library. It was brilliant! Sim City meets Command and Conquer. If only there were more games with this quality. If only PD developers came together, forming development teams, the Amiga would once more be a success, instead of letting pirates and crap developers kill the Amiga.

Could everyone with a PC do me a favour and SHUT UP! They say "Get a PC. They're faster, blah blah blah...". What's the point in spending £1500 on a PC when in a month's time it'll be obsolete and you'll have to spend another £500 to upgrade the pile? You could just spend £500 on a creamy coloured box of joy with the label Amiga on it and never need to upgrade again.

If anyone wants to help the Amiga games scene by forming a development team send a CV to me and state what you can do (eg. design, programming language, graphics/animation etc). Age doesn't matter.

So I leave you with two questions: are you going to just stand and watch the PC take a turd on the Amiga? And now you know the problem, just what are WE going to do about it?

"Havok", 40 New Road, Formby, Liverpool L37 7EF.

Are you quite finished, Mr Havok? Someone got out of bed the wrong side this morning obviously. You're right about the Amiga games scene. The big money moved out a long time ago, but don't think it was piracy that caused the shift. There's plenty of piracy on the CD-based consoles now, while developers continue to fall over themselves in order to make PlayStation games.

CU Amiga is published by EMAP Images, the country's leading publisher of console games magazines, and so we were in a good position to see how and why the action switched away from the Amiga. Much of it was to do with the exciting new programming opportunities that these 3D consoles offered, but there was also the image aspect.

Let's say two representatives from two different developers were in the building at once, both there to show us their new Amiga game. One asks the other if they are doing anything for the new 32-bit consoles. The other turns a deep shade of red, and concedes that no, they're not actually. Back at base, the blushing software rep decides not to be embarrassed like that again, and promptly switches all new projects over to the consoles. Not that they would admit it, but it seems it was this attitude that caused many of the big developers to suddenly and com-

pletely turn their back on the Amiga (as opposed to simply expanding into console development).

Even so, let's not fool ourselves into thinking that a current Amiga can compete on an even footing with a PlayStation when it comes to games, at least not if you are planning to spend £500 on the Amiga and never upgrade it, as you suggest.

It's good to see you're willing to do something about it though. All the best with your development team venture, and do let us know how you get on.

Command & Conquer?

I am an Italian Amiga user and I read every month the superb CU Amiga. I have just purchased the April issue and I was reading it when I came across the CD-ROM Scene section of your beautiful mag. I was reading the Aminet Collection 4 review when I noticed the small picture on the right: "This game is Command & Conquer!" I immediately thought (I know this game very well because I played it a lot). Now, what I ask is: what is the name of this game? What is the Aminet CD in which I can find it, or, better still, what's the Aminet path of this game?

Please, tell me what this game is and where I can find it! I must have that game! I hope you will answer me. Oh yes, and hello to everybody at CU Amiga and continue the excellent work!

dpozzi@ing.unico.it

That one picture has made an amazing impact on our readers. It's from a game called Forgotten Forever by Hungarian developers Charm Design. We covered it in our previews round-up in the June issue (page 39). There wasn't actually a demo of it on the Aminet Set CDs we reviewed, instead just a few screenshots. There is no demo at the time of writing, but we are in contact with Charm Design, so we'll keep you informed. You can find out more from http://dragon.klte.hu/~zavacki

Alternatively, you might be interested to hear that clickBOOM is said to be in negotiations with the creators of Command and Conquer to convert the sequel, Red Alert to the Amiga. Likewise, we'll keep you up to date with developments on that score too.



Forgotten Forever

Outdated E-mail

I find it rather sad that there are companies who advertise a web presence and an E-mail address who do not seem to update their web sites, but even worse do not respond to E-mail. One would think that given the climate the Amiga has had to endure, that companies would be quick to respond to E-mails, especially where one is indicating a readiness to make a purchase. Do they not want to sell their product? Do they not want to stay in business? It sure puzzles me.

Advertisers, please keep your web sites up-to-date and respond to E-mails. We do not want to visit your web site in April 1997 to find "specials" with 1996 expiry dates still being promoted. It would be better not to have a web presence than this.

Ken Harvey, Australia,

It seems many companies are jumping in feet first with a web site, without realising the amount of work required to keep such a thing up to date. When we launched our site, we soon found we didn't have enough man hours to keep it up and produce the magazine as well. We've since had a total overhaul of the site and a bit of a re-shuffle staff-wise to make it a viable proposition. As you say, it's in their interests to sort it out. Who wants to lose sales?

Moooo!

I was surprised to see that CU Amiga was the only Amiga mag to make a big deal out of the Gateway Amiga buyout, apart from the initial news pieces that ran across the press. Even so, your coverage of the deal didn't go into much more depth than you had already done with the Stop Press leaflet (which was excellent by the way and has been photocopied and handed round to many friends and fellow Amiga heads – hope this is OK with you).

After CU's balanced comment and coverage of the rumours leading up to the deal, it was good to be able to read some facts, safe in the knowledge that they were indeed facts. Let's hope that soon we'll have some real good news to celebrate.

Peter Beresford, Woking



■ No rumours or conjecture from CU. Just the plain old facts.

Amiga bites

I've just seen CU Amiga on BBC2's new computer programme, 'Computers Don't Bite'... a typically lame "Buy a PC" type programme, but you lot were on it (in paper form).

Strangely, when Carol Vorderman was informing people of what to get when buying a (hhnnnggg!) PeeCee, she seemed to be telling them to effectively buy an Amiga, telling them to only buy what they would need, not being fooled into buying an overpriced computer when they only needed a cheaper one, tsk, tsk BBC...

And next week, they're off to PC World... somewhat contradictory, don't you think?

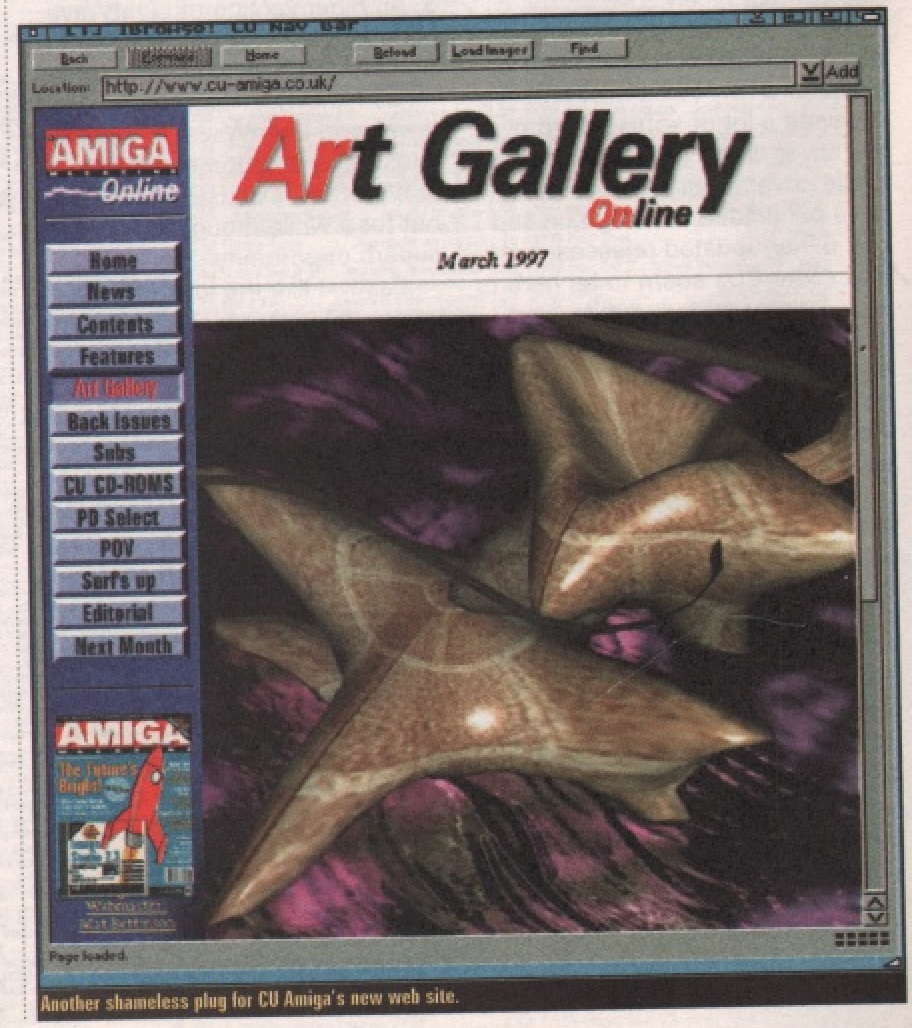
James Caygill, Northampton.

Wow! Amiga in 'positive publicity' shocker in mass media! You don't get many of those to the pound.

Big up A\Box

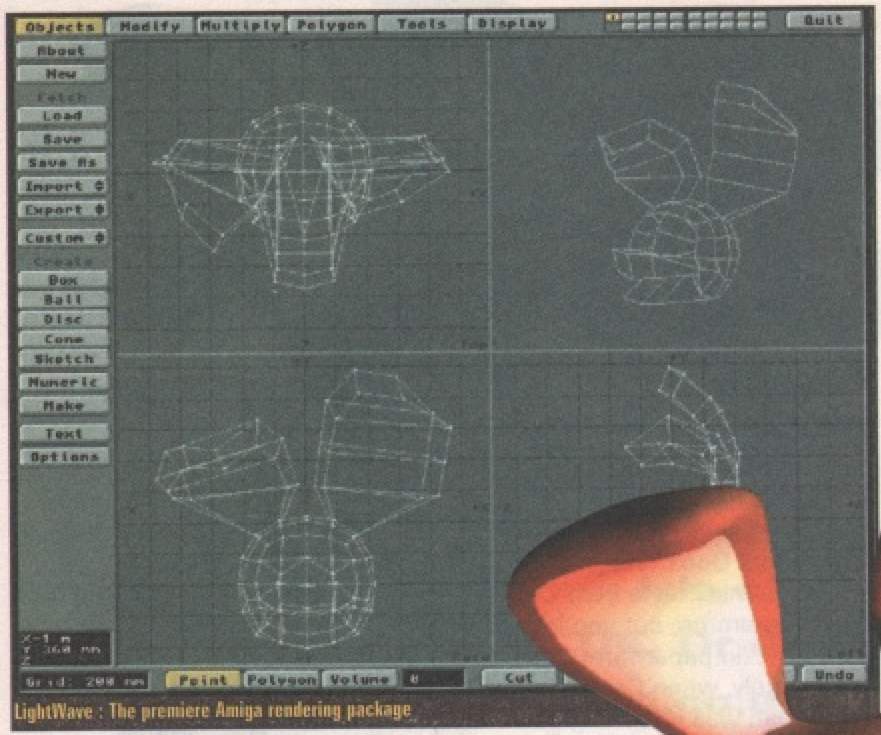
Re: Your response to the Letter of the Month from the March 1997 CU Amiga issue.

I would like to show my support for your viewpoint [that we should embrace the A\Box despite its lack of official Amiga branding] and express the hope



Another shameless plug for CU Amiga's new web site.

Continued overleaf ►►►



LightWave : The premiere Amiga rendering package

that Gateway 2000 will co-operate with phase 5 to make the A\Box the next official Amiga. I have not heard of any alternatives that have sounded worth investing in to replace my current equipment and I would hate to see the Amiga user base fractured. The next Amiga deserves all the support it can get to succeed. With phase 5's technical know-how and Gateway 2000's very good customer support (well it's certainly good in Australia based on my contact with them at work), the two would seem to complement one another nicely.

On to another topic. I've been buying Amiga computer magazines for a few years now and I've obtained a lot of software from the cover disks. Quite a few of these cover mounted versions have persuaded me to go on and buy full or updated releases. Now that cover CDs seem to be here to stay, I was wondering if it were possible to look at using them to distribute things that haven't been done in the past, ie. not another wordprocessor, paint, 3D or music program but something fresh.

There are several things that I would like to see, including the following (though it may take some negotiation to get them):

1. A full release of the Internet Movie Database. I know this is on Aminet but it is just too big to download. Online access is too much trouble for casual use and too expensive for extended browsing. This choice should appeal to a broad base of readers.

2. A full release of UNIX for Amiga (NetBSD and/or Linux). There should be plenty of users out there now with the necessary hardware. Future articles and cover CD goodies could include software to run under UNIX including X Windows. Many users could be interested in this OS as it is available on a number of platforms and extensive knowledge of it would be a good career move. There may also be uses for it with students. Also, if phase 5 succeed with the A\Box, a good knowledge of UNIX may fit in well with their intended OS.

3. An older version of LightWave 3D. Yes, I know it's a 3D program but it hasn't been done before (as far as I know). I'm tired of hearing how good LightWave is and the latest release is too expensive for non-professional use. Just to try it out for a while though would be a superb opportunity.

Lastly, I like the look of your revamped web pages... they look quite professional. It's a shame that some of the pages are blank with just a March 1997 title up the top. Will they ever be finished/updated regularly?

Ken Richards
kenrich1@ozemail.com.au

Great minds think alike, and other clichés... We're working along very similar lines at the moment as far as cover disks go. Take another look at our web pages (www.cu-amiga.co.uk) and you'll see they've had a complete overhaul. In fact, it's looking like the most popular Amiga site of the moment, judging by the amount of hits we're getting.

Games gone

Since late 1990 I have been reading your magazine and getting great insight on games and applications. But sadly, the amount of commercial new games coming out has come to a steady and grinding halt. This saddens me as an avid Amiga user and so has been a perplexing problem nagging in the back of my mind for quite some time.



Where have all the games in production gone? Why not get all the once great Amiga game producers to finish old projects and get them onto our shelves. It would be more than welcome in the Amiga community having the chance to buy such games as Simon the Sorcerer II or maybe have old games like Stunt Car Racer, SWIV and FlashBack re-vamped to AGA with eight channel sound. It's better than not getting any games at all. Now I have a few questions.

A friend told me there was a third game in the Stardust series. Is this true? Also where is Frontier: First Encounters? And who would you suggest I order games from, as I am in Tasmania, Australia and cannot buy games in the shops anymore? Thank You for being with us still.

N Milnes, Tasmania, Australia

It might seem like it's all doom and gloom on the games front, but the key to its survival will be the enthusiasm of the many independent Amiga coders around the globe, and there's no shortage of those. There's the people who made their own Quake conversion (unfortunately withheld from legal distribution by ID Software), the forthcoming conversion of Myst and all sorts of unofficial clones and ports of other big name games appearing around the Internet. The missing link at the moment is someone willing to publish these gems, although the likes of Epic (with their Islona label) and Vulcan are doing a good job in getting them a proper release.

We've not heard anything about a Stardust III and Frontier: First Encounters was shelved due to technical difficulties (they wanted it to run on a 1Mb A500 – doh!), and you should definitely check out our 50 Best Amiga Games Ever feature from the April issue, which contains plenty of contacts for (UK based) mail order Amiga games suppliers.

To the Point...

Which Doom clone?

if you had to choose between Out of Breathless, AB3DII and Gloom Deluxe, which game, in your opinion would you say was the overall best in terms of gameplay and graphics?

Mathew Collins, Leicester

The team's combined opinion, rolled into one, is that for graphics, AB3DII is best if you have a fast Amiga, due to its snazzy lighting effects and aliens, but it does jerk. Gloom Deluxe scores best on gameplay if you want a fast shoot 'em up without too much thinking involved. Personally, we were left somewhat un-gobsmacked by Breathless, which seems to have neither the pace of Gloom Deluxe nor the atmosphere of AB3DII. However, Breathless is still a pretty decent Doom game all the same, so don't count it out.

Fruity features

I'd just like to say that I've been reading CU Amiga now for over five years and not missed a single issue (well, only one or two), and even though the Amiga is arguably in its worst state ever, conversely your magazine is better than it has ever been. The recent run of features, cover disks (CDs) and reviews has pleasantly surprised me on a regular monthly basis. So one question: why has it taken so long?

Colin Edwards, Kidderminster

You're making us blush now! Why has it taken so long? Who knows, maybe we just weren't trying before.

More DIY

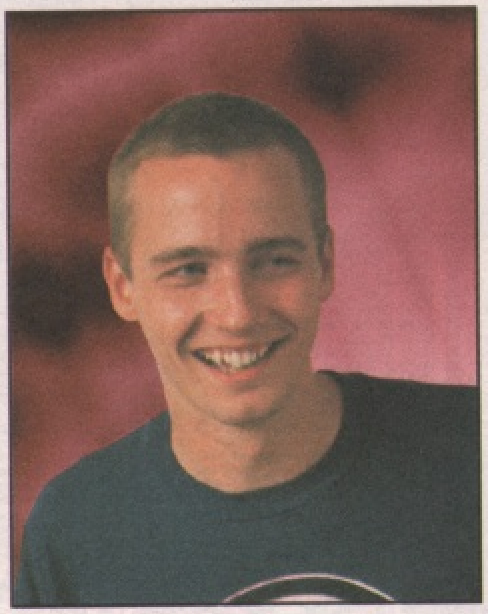
It was with a hint of sadness that I poured over the third and final part of your Build Your Own Tower series. Not because I can't afford/be bothered to do it myself (I'm saving up), but because it was the last part of an excellent feature. So just what do you intend to do next? How about a similar thing devoted to making your own portable Amiga? Now there's a challenge!

Adrian Miles, Northampton

Never let it be said that we don't like a challenge here at CU Amiga. Thanks for your support – and as for a new project as a series feature, well watch this space...

Points of view

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be.



■ Tony Horgan CU Amiga Magazine's Editor

by Tony Horgan

It's showtime! Well, by the time you read this, the World of Amiga Show will have come and gone, but publishing schedules are such that I'm writing this before the event. Still, it all should have gone ahead as planned, with thousands of happy punters having made the return journey, tired but satisfied, with a carrier bag or two full of bargain widgets for company.

> **“The thrill of a man dressed in a pink catsuit with a big nose tossing out free 'Pi Man' games...”**

This year's show is very welcome, after the troubles the Amiga has had to ride out over the past twelve months. After the demise of Escom, many wrote off another World of Amiga show, but it's back, and looks to be even better than before.

Typically, the WOA show is not like other computer shows. At your regular PC show you'll be bombarded with glossy publicity packs, video walls with American accented voice-overs, men in suits, information technology seminars, more suits... Your regular Amiga show however is a whole different ball game. You're likely to see more Star Trek T-shirts than suits, and anyone droning on about information technology will be swiftly drowned out by the nearest PD/CD-ROM supplier blasting out the soundtrack of the latest hot demo. In fact, it's easy to trace the show's roots to the ZX Microfairs held in the early 80s.

As a school kid, I remember getting strangely excited at the thought of travelling up to Muswell Hill in North London, pocket money clenched firmly in hand, to check out all the latest developments on the ZX81 and Spectrum scenes, as I'm sure many of you reading this must have done too. But who could blame us? I mean, the thrill of a man dressed in a pink catsuit with a big nose tossing out free 'Pi Man' games to the crowd, the swap-frenzy down the back of the hall, in which you could switch your copy of Mr Wimpy for some sucker's Ant Attack, or maybe even get technical and buy a Currah speech synthesiser. And for landmark technical achievements, the legendary miracle of the Space Invaders clone that featured high resolution graphics – on a ZX81 was awesome!

Then comes the long trip home – probably the only time in your entire life that you'll read an instruction manual. Not forgetting that jealous sideways glance at the bloke seen leaving with a new computer/monitor/rocket under his arm. And all I got was a roll of fire damaged thermal printer paper.

Why all this eye-moistening nostalgia? Well, that's how I hope most of you see recent Amiga shows. Over 10 years, I've attended Commodore and Amiga shows as a magazine exhibitor, with Commodore Computing International, Amiga User and more recently CU Amiga, which puts a different, but still enjoyable slant on it from my personal perspective.

I hope anyone who managed to get there had a good day out. Who knows, if things improve, we might even get back to the situation where we have an Amiga show 'up North'. Stranger things have happened. ■

A letter from America...

■ Jason Compton is Editor-In-Chief for Amiga Report Online Magazine

by Jason Compton

I'm the owner of a computer which is not the most popular platform in the world. It's not even number 2. And you know what? I couldn't be happier.

Just as it's important to have different points of view, I firmly believe that it's important to have different ways of doing things, even if everybody has the same goals. Hence, it's just as important that we have Final Writer as it is that we have Wordworth. It's just as important that we have ImageFX as it is that we have ArtEffect. It's just as important that we have Cinema4D as it is that we have Lightwave and Imagine – and on the same token, it's just as important that the world has the Amiga as it is that it has PCs and Macs. They can have things their way, we'll have it our way.

> **“...the Amiga market is laden with 'local boy makes good' stories and real people who you can reach out to”**

There's a certain short-sightedness at play in the computer world. Much of it comes from the US: American minds who seem hard-wired into the idea of dichotomy – a choice between only two options. It's no wonder that the American computing press can't cope with the idea of platforms other than the PC and Mac when of 435 officials in the lower parliamentary house, exactly ONE is officially "independent." All of the other 434 are from one of the two major parties. I take a look at European politics and society, and I see a far more complex mix, which I really believe to be one of the reasons the Amiga has enjoyed greater success in Europe than here.

Believing in "safety in numbers", makes "safety" also anonymous. Your average PC user can't make a difference to the PC world – everything is far too diffused and companies are too big for individual efforts to be acknowledged. Luckily, the Amiga market is laden with "local boy makes good" stories and real people who you can reach out to. Look at the people CU interview. Their individual efforts have made lasting impressions on us and our Amigas.

I would like to see the Amiga market grow to new levels, guided by Gateway. But to get there, we need to remember the things that have made the Amiga as lasting as it has been. We all know what is best for us and we've made our computer platform choice accordingly. It's important not to let anybody take that away from us, and equally important not to lose sight of what has made the recent difficult years bearable as we scramble for new answers and new direction. ■

Infringing on creativity



by Andrew Korn

There is a rather lax attitude toward copyright in the Amiga world. No, this isn't yet another diatribe about the evils of software piracy, what I am talking about is the way so many in the Amiga world use other people's work. If you were to buy yourself a PC CD-ROM of clip art, the artwork would probably be copyright cleared. You don't want to use an image in some important piece of work only to find that you are in breech of the copyright. Copyright clearance is something that all too many in the Amiga world seem oblivious to.

One of the reasons has to be the influence the Internet has on the Amiga scene. On the Internet, people have a tendency to use resources as they see fit. If a nice GIF turns up on someone's web site, you can be sure that it will be on another dozen within 24 hours. In the relatively small world of the Amiga, the assumption is that this doesn't really hurt anyone.

So it doesn't hurt who then? I reckon that if some X-phile put a collection of a thousand pictures of Gillian Anderson on a CD-ROM, you can bet that they haven't paid the photographers for duplication rights. This would most likely amount to somewhere in the region of a 6 figure sum at least, going on the basis of normal fees. Of course no-one would be able to get a those sorts of fees, the average Amiga CD-ROM doesn't make close to this sort of money. OK, so sometimes these things just happen, but given the highly creative tendencies of the Amiga community, what really puzzles me is how often people don't even acknowledge the work of others.

> **“Scanning images into a computer does NOT magically make them your copyright”**

One of the worst problem areas is illustration. Scanning images into a computer does NOT magically make them your copyright, and certainly doesn't make them your work. Many real Amiga artists are so concerned with the ubiquity of scanning that they write "not scanned" on their work. A recent series of uploads to the Aminet consisted of a collection of works accompanied with a small textfile and no credits beyond the line "picture by Jake". I'm not certain if this person is really trying to claim authorship, but I know at least some of the images aren't his, and a text file saying something along the lines of "this picture is like 30s or 40s pulp SF covers" is not the same as saying "Picture by Frank Kelly Freas, 1958." We all expect credit for our own work, let's see some effort put into crediting others. ■

■ Andrew Korn is CU Amiga Magazine's Staff Writer.

Great tools don't make great mechanics



by Mat Bettinson

It must be time for a rant. I am sick to the back teeth of Amiga users arguing all the time. People announcing to the world that MUI is great, MUI is evil, Directory Opus 5 is a step backwards or Opus 5 is the greatest thing since sliced bread. AWeb is best, no IBrowse is, no V-NG is the only good web browser. It goes on and on and on. I've been listening to it for years now and everyone is exactly at the same place they were back then. Guess what, if someone hates something you love or vice versa, arguing about it isn't going to change their mind. It's just going to lead to stress and a complete lack of any productive effect at all. Their opinion may be completely unjustified, based on rumour, hearsay and ignorance but it makes no difference! They are happy little people in their own part of Amiga land so why not leave them be?

Oh I don't expect for a moment suddenly everyone is going to stop debating on Amiga software and products. How would any of us know there's a better way to do something unless we hear of it from someone else? It's the same old arguments that bother me; MUI vs Gadtools vs Classact, Opus 4 vs 5, Web browsers, Newicons vs MWB, AFS vs FFS and so on. It's already been done. You might think someone else is crazy but their needs are probably different, as their Amiga specification is almost certain to be. Above all else, their personal preference may well be different and that's not a crime, it's the basis for modern society. It's got to the stage where I can hardly stand to read Usenet, join an IRC channel or read my E-mail. Wherever I go the same old arguments are raging. People try to convince me that the tools I use, or prefer, aren't as good as the ones they use.

> **“Where ever I go the same old arguments are raging. People try to convince me that the tools I use aren't as good as the ones they use.”**

Surely there's more constructive things to talk about? How's some of these for starters; What are we going to do about porting to PowerPC? What does Gateway 2000 really mean for us? Have you seen the latest software on Aminet? Isn't it just great that the Amiga's software is getting so good these days? Has anyone found a way of doing X? What would you like to see in a new Amiga? Productive useful conversation with other people enlightened enough to use the Amiga platform, if not your specific choice of software. It's easy to revel in our computing bliss but there's no reason to impose it on others, lord knows we despise this enough on other platforms. It's about as welcome as Mormons calling during your best mate's stag night. I think we're all incredibly lucky that we have a wide and excellent choice of high quality software to use at all. Enough said, enjoy the magazine. ■

■ Mat Bettinson is CU Amiga Magazine's Technical Editor.

Back Issues

Desperate to see what you've missed? Then, relief comes in the form of CU back issues...

May 1996



ON THE DISKS: Soundtracker Pro II, MIDI Sequencer demo, Alien Breed 3D2 demo. **FEATURES:** Free Amiga music book, the new Walker, Amiga Surfer pack, and the quest for Amigas. **INSIDE:** LightWave 4, Slamtilt Pinball, Tracksuit Manager 2 reviewed.

June 1996



ON THE DISKS: Termite demo, Killing Grounds demo. Plus free 96 page net and comms guide. **FEATURES:** Escom sells Amiga Technologies, publish your music. **INSIDE:** Modem round-up, Total Football and new TimeKeepers disk reviewed.

July 1996



ON THE DISKS: XiPaint (full program) and Primal Rage demo. **FEATURES:** Special report on what's happening in Europe and the latest on Visorp and PIOS. **INSIDE:** Image FX 2.6, Surf Squirrel, A4000 Tower, Primal Rage, SWOS Euro and more reviewed.

August 1996



ON THE DISKS: EasyCalc (full program) and Valhalla III demo. **FEATURES:** The future of the Amiga with VIScorp, the new PIOS machine and the second part of the Euroscene feature. **INSIDE:** Siamese Twin, Photogenics 2.0, Valhalla III and Tin Toy reviewed.

September 1996



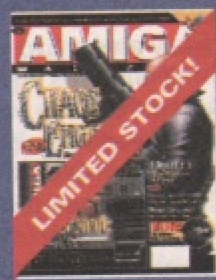
ON THE DISKS: Vista Lite (full program) and a demo of Brian Lara Cricket '96. CD-ROM edition too. **FEATURES:** The Aminet exposed. All 6 gigabytes! **INSIDE:** Final Writer 5, OctaMED SoundStudio, Atapi CD-ROM drive. Plus an exclusive preview of the new AGA Worms.

October 1996



ON THE DISKS: Upper Disk Tools: ideal for sorting out those awkward disks and drives! **FEATURES:** The Amiga in America, Net software... **INSIDE:** The speed issue, or something. Three top accelerators, a TCP/IP stack comparison and Capital Punishment.

November 1996



ON THE DISKS: XCAD 2000 - The premier 3D CAD package, plus Chaos Engine 2. Choose CD-ROM or floppy edition. **FEATURES:** Palmtop Amiga-Psion link-up. **INSIDE:** Opus 5.5, Delfina DSP sound card, Web Browser War, Alfa Quatro, CD-ROM writer and more.

December 1996



ON THE DISKS: Wordworth 3.1 SE, Worms - The Directors Cut demo. CD-ROM or floppy edition. **FEATURES:** CD-ROM drive for £50! Amiga and PC games on CD-ROM. **INSIDE:** Draw Studio, Apollo 1230, Storm C, Siamese RTG system, Teen Agent, Tiny Troops and more.

January 1997



ON THE DISKS: Imagine 4.0, Underwater Capers, plus over 100Mb of Imagine extras on CD. CD-ROM or floppy edition. **FEATURES:** Get a job in computer graphics, plus eight pages of Imagine 4.0. **INSIDE:** Art Effect, PPaint 7, SWOS 96-97, Fighting Spirit, Chaos Engine 2 ...

February 1997



ON THE DISKS: Design Works, Minskies Furballs plus Worms – the Director's Cut extras and Imagine extras on the CD. **FEATURES:** The new A/Box and working in computer graphics part II. **INSIDE:** Wordworth 6 Office, Turbo Calc, Minskies Furballs, Bograts reviewed.

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March 1997



ON THE DISKS: OctaMED SoundStudio (full program) Chaos Engine 2. Plus Chaos Engine 2 AGA demo and lots more on CD. **FEATURES:** Turn your Amiga into a pro studio. Printers: problems solved. **INSIDE:** Quickcam, Cyber-vision 3D, SMD 100, JetPilot and more reviewed.

April 1997



ON THE DISKS: Directory Opus 5.11 (full program). Tiny Troops demo, Loads of stuff on CD. **FEATURES:** Build your own Tower Amiga Part 1. The 50 best Amiga Games ever! **INSIDE:** Massive Cinema 4D 3.0 Review, new DTP series, ProGrab Sampler, Teletext Decoder, and more.

May 1997



ON THE DISKS: Image Studio (full program) Kargon RPG demo. Exclusive clipart on CD & much more. **FEATURES:** The Future's Bright: Gateway buys Amiga! Tower Amiga Part 2. Internet Killed the Radio Star **INSIDE:** PageStream 3.2, Big Red Adventure, LightWave 5, Epson Stylus 600...

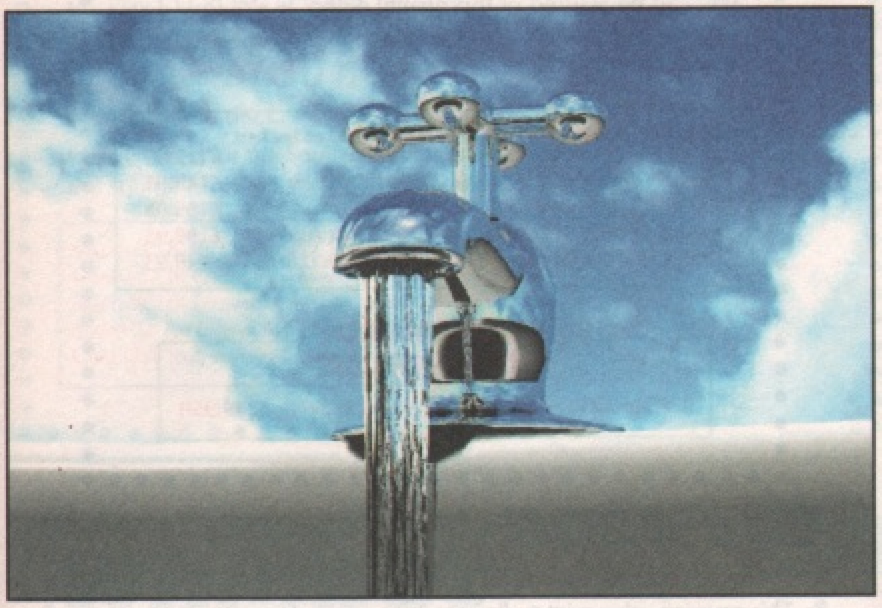
June 1997



ON THE DISKS: Pro Page 4.1 (full program) MPEGA 2.4, Sysinspector, The Sun game and more! **FEATURES:** Gateway/Amiga update, CD-R for Amiga – cut your own CDs for a few hundred pounds plus Tower Amiga Part 3: Zorro. **INSIDE:** Turbo Print 5, Net Connect, Cybervision...

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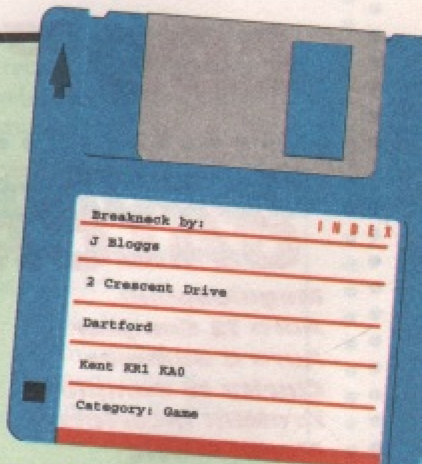
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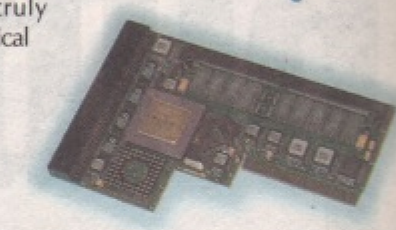
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Squirrel ZIP

The revolutionary Zip drive from Iomega is one of the major technological developments of the 90s, and it works perfectly on your Amiga with our tailor-made Squirrel Zip kits.



SQUIRREL ZIP100 PACK

The complete Zip100 pack for any SCSI-aware Amiga computer:

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- ✔ Special 25-way to 50-way converter for use with Squirrel SCSI or other SCSI peripherals.

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SQUIRREL ZIP100 GOLD PACK

The Gold Pack contains everything in the standard pack (see left) plus:

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- ✔ SCSI lead of your choice: 25-way to 50-way, 50-way to 50-way etc.

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Make my own CDs? No, too expensive. Well, not any more with the brand-new SquirrelCDR system. Combining a brilliant, 2-speed write, 6-speed read CDR drive with the excellent commercial version of MakeCD, the SquirrelCDR system is unbeatable - just look at what you can do:

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- ✔ Create mixed audio / data discs.
- ✔ Create bootable CD32 discs-perfect for demos!
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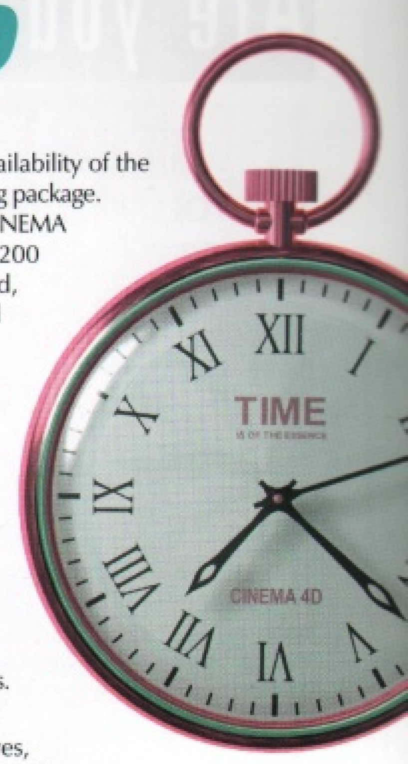


Ideally suited for the Squirrel SCSI interfaces on the A1200, the SquirrelCDR will also work on most SCSI-aware Amigas.

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MakeCD *(full commercial version, no restrictions)*	£39.95
Gold Disk *(fully warranted, 650Mb capacity)*	£6.95

Cinema4D CD EDITION

We are delighted to announce the immediate availability of the CD Edition of the acclaimed CINEMA 4D raytracing package. The CD Edition includes a brand-new version of CINEMA 4D, many more textures, scenes and objects (>200 predefined materials, >400 bitmap textures) and, as a special FREE bonus, CinemaWORLD and CinemaFONT are included!



For those who already know CINEMA 4D, here are some of the new features:

- ✔ Direct 68060 support - rendering up to 100% faster.
- ✔ Brand new Material Manager with material previews.
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The Whippet really comes into its own when surfing the Internet. High speed drivers allow the use of web browsers, ftp clients, email clients, usenet readers and other Internet tools, all at the same time without any loss of data—and with full multitasking!

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